

PLAYSTATION PLUS

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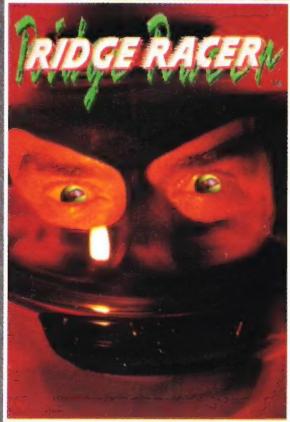
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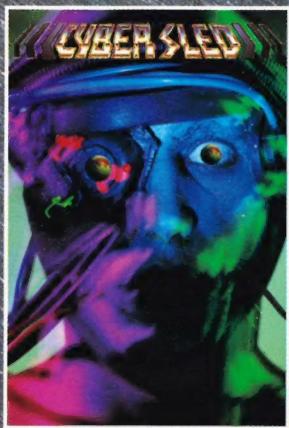
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Market Harborough,
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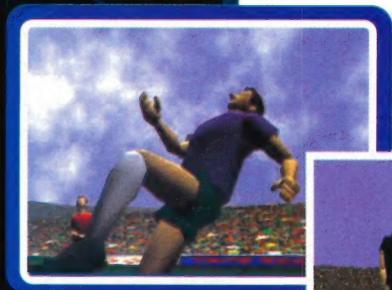
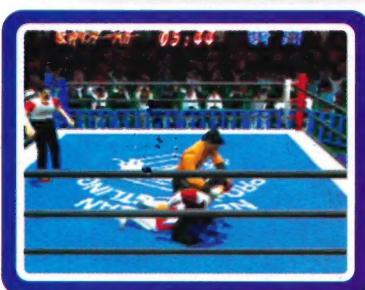
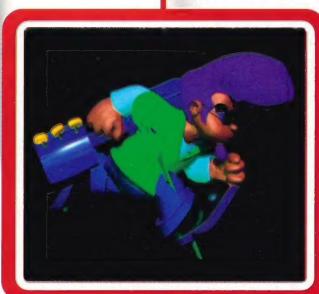
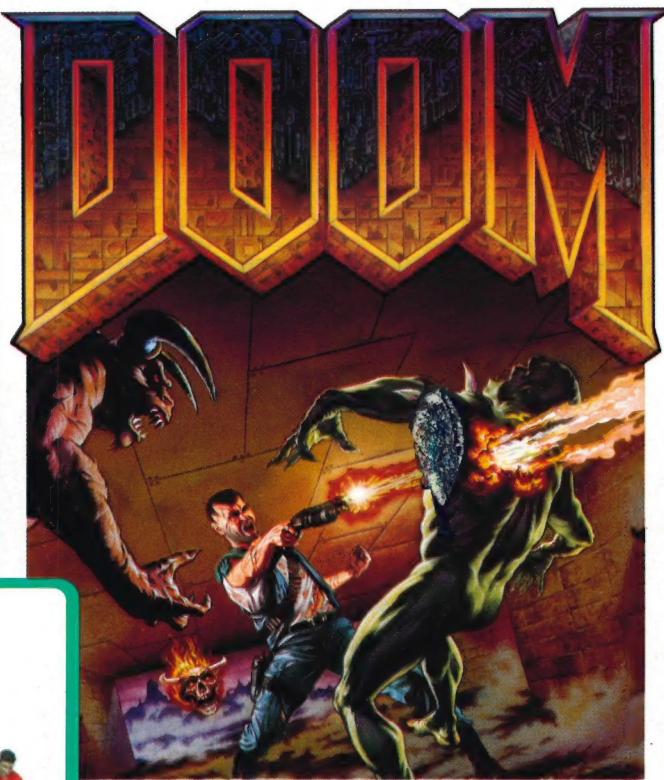
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COVER STORY

14 The greatest game ever to grace a PC hits the PlayStation in a greatly revamped version containing all the best levels from *Doom*, *Doom II: Hell on Earth*, and *Ultimate Doom*. Our exhaustive review details every aspect of GTi's stunning conversion, and chats to Williams, the people behind the conversion.



REGULARS:

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FEATURES:

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Games like *Fade to Black*, *Adidas Power Soccer*, and *City of the Lost Children* are soon to put gallic developers on the PlayStation map. Our feature goes behind the scenes of the aforementioned titles, and exchanges parlez with Delphine and Sony Interactive's French division.

WHAT GOES AROUND...: 104

We may be experiencing a new wave of video game enthusiasm, but more and more old ideas are being dredged up and updated for the PlayStation. To celebrate the arrival of EA's *Viewpoint* conversion, we go back in time – only to find it strangely mixing with the present.

PREVIEWS

A special glimpse at Namco's eagerly-awaited *Ridge Racer Revolution* paves the way into early looks at Sony's home-grown basketball epic, *Total NBA*, with a fine supporting cast including Microprose's *Gunship 2000*, with *World Cup Golf* and *Johnny Bazookatone* from US Gold.

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REVIEWS:

The wait is over, and football fans finally have a Sony saviour. *FIFA '96* heads off a review section, backed up by equally strong titles such as Infogrames' *Alone in the Dark* and Virgin's *Agile Warrior*, with Telstar's *Lone Soldier* also lining up for review duty.

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NEWS

PLAYSTATION EXPO UNVEILS THE FUTURE

With the PlayStation now ensconced in 50,000 homes and with Christmas around the corner, Sony are already looking to 1996 and keeping the steady supply of software coming. And October's PlayStation Expo '95 was the place where it was all on show...

Across the 7th and 8th of October, Tokyo played host to the first ever PlayStation Expo, where anyone who is remotely anything to do with the Sony machine was on hand to reveal new products and ideas. Co-sponsored by a trio of Japanese magazines, Expo '95 was the perfect showcase for the Sony machine, and the companies on hand to unveil new product ranged from Konami, Virgin, EA and Namco. Based in one huge hall, the Expo featured stands displaying all the forthcoming titles in either embryonic forms or towards the end of development. Capcom, for example, surprised visitors by displaying a virtually complete and very playable version of *Street Fighter Alpha* on a bank of widescreen televisions, while Namco whetted peoples' appetites for *Tekken II* with a stand donning a handful of coin-ops. The main PlayStation attraction on the Namco stand, though, was the freshly-unveiled *Ridge Racer Revolution* which finally put shot to moaning of a lack of tracks.

In all, over 200 games were on show, and a central stage also played host to special presentations where developers displayed their pride and joys while taking questions from the floor. The two days were thus broken up into forty-minute slots, with games like *SideWinder* and *D* (to be released by Acclaim on these shores) among those taking centre stage. The games which the Japanese seem most impressed with were Bullfrog's conversion of *Theme Park* for EA, and *Zero Divide* – the latter proving the Japanese can never have enough beat 'em ups.

The Expo also proved valuable hunting ground for UK publishers, with several titles currently under negotiation – *Criticom* (page 44) being a perfect example.

Overall, the Expo was deemed a massive success, and plans are already afoot for a follow-up activity the same time next year although the number of products will almost certainly be at least a third larger.





THE MASSES GATHER TO HAVE A FEW GOES ON SOME OF THE PLAYSTATION FAVOURITES AND CONTEMPLATE ALL THE GAMES THEY WANT FOR CHRISTMAS.



BACK ON THE HOME FRONT

Meanwhile, back in the UK the Sony publicity machine with more 'celebs' (well, Robbie Williams and mini-pops, MN8, caught on camera pottering around with *Ridge Racer* and generally enjoying the hipness of it all. There was more than enough reason for Sony to celebrate, though, as European sales topped the 50,000 mark within three months of the machine's September 29th launch. With Sony aiming for a 100,000 user base by April, it looks like a good Christmas could see them pass this mark with ease. Oh dear, who would want a Sega Saturn right now...



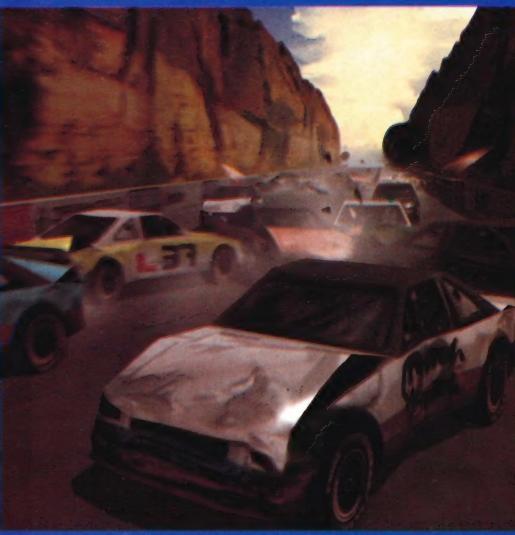
AFTER A BUSY SESSION ON THE PLAYSTATION THE MN8 CHAPS GIVE IT THE THUMBS UP. BELOW ROBBIE DEMONSTRATES HIS POST-TAKE THAT PASTIME.



THE BRITS ARE COMING

Considering consoles are normally initially provided for by our US and Eastern cousins, PlayStation Expo '95 was a veritable showcase of English and European developing talent. Among those on display and going down a storm were:

VIEWPOINT
ROAD RASH
THEME PARK
HI-OCTANE
STRIKER '96
DESTRUCTION
DERBY
3D LEMMINGS
DEFCON 5
ALONE IN THE DARK
TOTAL NBA
WIPEOUT



DECEMBER RELEASES

A few of last month's titles slip back a month...

GAMES:

MORTAL KOMBAT III

Superb conversion of the Williams coin-op.

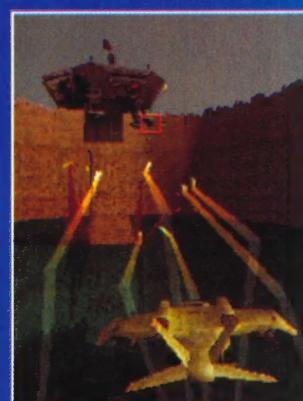


ESPN EXTREME GAMES

A supremely playable mixture of *Road Rash* and roller-blading/cycling/skating. Slipped to a December release.

WARHAWK

3D blaster reviewed this issue (page 84).



STARBLADE ALPHA

Awful 3D blaster from Namco. Pretty, but minimal playability.

PERIPHERALS: MULTI-TAP

Allows four players to gather around the ol' PlayStation.

EURO AV CABLE

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WHAT A RIP OFF!



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FANTASTIC FOUR MEET IRON MAN



Marvel's *Fantastic Four* are set to appear in a forthcoming PlayStation title courtesy of Acclaim — with a game based on *Iron Man* on the cards, too. Both deals are courtesy of Acclaim's recent part-merger with Marvel, a deal which will see Acclaim get first dibs on all of their characters. At the time of writing, the game scenarios and details were not available, but a *Fantastic Four* film is (again) being mooted, and Acclaim's licence could be an indication that it has finally been given the green light.

HORNED OWL

Best described as a cross between Sega's *Virtua Cop* and Sony's own *Twisted Metal*, *Horned Owl* is a Sony of Japan shoot 'em up set within the confines of a dark and seedy cityscape. Cast as a member of an elite SWAT team, the player is given a complete run of the city as they attempt to blow away the renegade droids and villains currently running amok. Thankfully, a full complement of missiles, bullets and smart bombs makes life on the beat more interesting, and although Sony have no UK plans at the time of writing, we envisage this potential rival to *Virtua Cop* appearing in the middle of 1996.



VIRGIN GET STREET FIGHTER ALPHA

Following our early shots last month, Virgin have announced plans to release *Street Fighter Alpha* on the PlayStation during the first quarter of 1996. With the code already complete and drawing huge crowds at the PlayStation Expo in Japan, Virgin are still awaiting their first code delivery, so a final release date can be announced. *Alpha* also marks the second spoils of an exclusive deal Virgin have signed with Capcom, which will begin with the official release of *DarkStalkers*, and continue throughout the year.

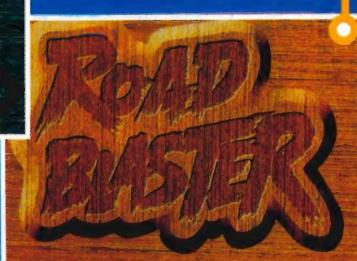


WORST GAMES EVER?

Ardent game players will be no doubt chuffed to ribbons to learn that two of the worst ever Mega-CD games are being converted for the PlayStation. *Road Avenger* and *Thunder Storm* are two of the least playable 'interactive movies' available for any system. In *Road Avenger* the player guides a car by pressing in the direction the randomly-appearing arrow dictates. Coincidentally, *Thunder Storm* swaps the car for a helicopter — and those arrows reappear. If its any consolation, both games are being released by Data East on one CD, but are unlikely to appear in the UK. 50,000 PlayStation owners breathe a sigh of relief.



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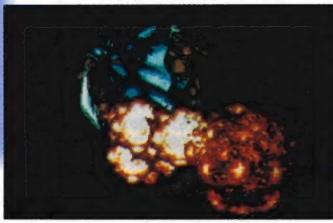
BATMAN TRIUMPHANT

The rumour mill is already looking as far ahead as 1997's releases, and word reaches us that part of Acclaim's recent batch of Warner movie acquisitions includes *Batman Triumphant*. The fourth in the Batman series, *Triumphant* has recently completed the casting stage, with Director Joel Schumacher and Batman Val Kilmer returning, with plans to include Chris O'Donnell's Robin into the as-yet incomplete script. Other casting rumours include Julia Roberts as either Batgirl or Poison Ivy, while Jim Carrey's Riddler is said to be pairing up with the returning Joker — as played by Jack Nicholson. Let's face it, though, at this stage of the game, rumours are all they can be. Acclaim will once again be using their Motion Capture Studio to recreate scenes from the film, and access to the sets is one of the benefits of acquiring the licence so early. Expect confirmation soon.



BEYOND THE BEYOND

RPG fans are under siege again, as Sony's Japanese division unleash *Beyond the Beyond* for the machine. Mixing elements of Nintendo's *Zelda* series with 3D battles and meetings, *Beyond the Beyond* is a huge adventure with the traditional mix of dragons, magic and evil-doers battling it out against the player's hand-picked team. As usual, battles are tactical affairs with hit points and magic bonuses, but initial feelings to Japan are proving extremely favourable. As of yet, a UK release hasn't been set, however.



TESTED

On trial: The PSX II with Slow, Auto, and Turbo buttons @ £24.99 from LMP Ltd. Contact: 01992 503133. The PS Propad with Auto and Slow buttons, along with LED display @ £29.99 from Spectra Video. Contact: 0181 908 2211.

PSXII



STREET FIGHTER: THE MOVIE

Though his pad features a Turbo button and a 'programmable' Auto button, but the Auto is the only useful one here (with the Slow button just toggling pause on and off). The D-pad is nice and solid — so all special moves are pretty easy — but the far 'tips' of the circle are perhaps slightly too raised. The buttons are nice and positive, and the only real bad news is that the moulded grips on the pads didn't naturally fall under either my, Steve's, or Alex's fingers.



TWSITED METAL

Good news all round really. Everything is very responsive, the joypad still feels comfortable after a long game, and, though the extra buttons aren't necessary (what with the game already featuring rapid guns) everything's groovy. And, er... that's it!



LONE SOLDIER

A nice simple game for this test, and the PSX II performs as you'd expect. Everything appears to be in its place; the Auto fire is of no real use; the Turbo actually makes the gun fire more slowly than if you just held down the usual fire button; and the finger buttons L and R round the right way (unlike a joypad reviewed last month!) What can I say? It does the job pretty well.



OVERALL

I like the PSX II. The buttons are decent (though slightly more 'squared' than the standard joypads) and the D-Pad is pretty positive. The grips neither work well nor get in the way, so you can just ignore them, while the additional buttons do their job well enough if you can find a game that actually warrants their use. I'm still not convinced that there's anything wrong with Sony's own pads, but the PSX II is one of the better options out there.



PS PROPAD



Excellent! Being able to control each and every button as far as the rapid fire goes makes everything almost SNES controller-like. The buttons are low and rounded, so 'rolling' between hits is very easy. The only downside here is the fact that the space between the directions on the D-pad is just slightly too large, making the double 'down, down/towards, towards, punch' for super specials a tad cumbersome. Other than that, very good indeed.



Yep, everything's groovy here. The controls are nice and responsive, and everything works as it should. The special joypad options are of no use here, but as such the pad does everything it should do. Sorry, I know that's a bit short, but there's nothing more to say!



As with the previous pad, there's not a lot that can go wrong here, and as such, the PS Propad is fine. The Auto-fire options are defunct for the same reasons as they were before, but the solid feel to the pad is definitely a bonus all round.



Very good. I like the PS Propad the best out of all those I've been sent, and if only the D-pad 'pointers' had been a touch closer together, I might even have been tempted to give it five out of five. Being able to programme each individual button as either rapid on touch or auto-continuous is a very nice feature, and even the grips moulded into the 'handles' are pretty decent. It's also worth mentioning that there are three speeds of 'Slow'. A very nice pad indeed.



RESIDENT EVIL

In a welcome change of tack from beat 'em up meisters, Capcom, the *Street Fighter* creators have tried their hand at a 3D arcade/adventure – and *Resident Evil* (formerly *Bio-Hazard*) is the result. Initially resembling Infogrames' *Alone in the Dark*, *Resident Evil* allows the player control over a male or female special agent, sent to explore strange happenings in an old mansion. Using cutaway views and highly detailed backdrops, *Resident Evil* is a stunning looking game and looks set to blow away others of its kind with ease.

The early version we have seen is stunningly atmospheric, with huge spiders scuttling towards the player using beautiful animation techniques, and total control available over the agents. Virgin have yet to announce a firm date for its release, though, as they are expecting problems with the censors over the game's blood quota. With zombies leaping out to bite necks and legs, and ravens pecking out eyes, *RE* is far from a kid's game and consequently wither end up with an 18 certificate of the zombies drawing green blood from their hosts.



EA CUE MADDEN

Continuing their assault on the Sony sports game market, EA are bringing their *Virtua Stadium* idea to American Football, with the imminent release of their John Madden licence for the PlayStation. *Madden '96* is a full-on simulation of the sport where padded jessies slam into each other in a poor imitation of Rugby. However, this being *Virtua Stadium*-land, EA are offering views from every conceivable angle, and camera trickery normally associated with US television. A review next month.

OCEAN KICK OFF

Ocean are entering the crowded Sony footy arena by bringing *Human's Hyper Formation Soccer* to PAL users. Now available on import, *HFS* is an arcade kickaround, offering a full selection of international squads, and three in-game views. In terms of playability, the Japanese code is severely flawed with duff goalies competing with dickhead players for who can move the slowest. We're assured the UK version is being tinkered with to eradicate some of these faults, and a March release date is being mooted.

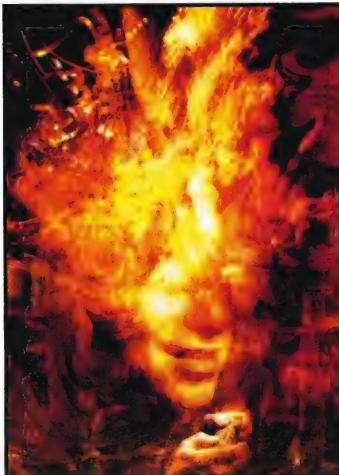


AN APOLOGY

It was late, we were on deadline, and Oz was on *Planet Eh?* where the design munchkins were playing tricks on him.

That was why the review of *Cyber Speed* (Issue 2, Page 66) had the wrong scores in it. Let it be known that we are chastened and bowed, and to rectify matters here's how the scores should have read:

GRAPHICS:77
ANIMATION:69
SOUND:83
MUSIC:85
PLAYABILITY:70
LASTABILITY:68
OVERALL:70



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THE SNOWMAN

by Raymond Briggs



In what could rank as one of the weirdest licences in video game history, Gaga Communications are planning a game based on Raymond Briggs' *The Snowman*. With the cartoon trotted out every Christmas, Gaga have created an interactive puzzler aimed at the younger market. The game is broken up into a series of puzzles with the player using icons to solve the riddles the game sets. For example, the ginger snot-nose must first decide which footwear to adorn before going out into the snow, and these scenes are linked by sequences lifted from the cartoon. Word reaches us that Millennium are planning to release the game in the UK, so you, too, could be walking in the air in the foreseeable future. Shudder.



WITH RUMOURS AROUND THAT MILLENNIUM HAVE TAKEN THE SNOWMAN ON BOARD, IT SEEMS LIKELY THAT IF IT'S TRUE THE CAMBRIDGE-BASED TEAM MAY RUSH THE PRODUCT OUT FOR A CHRISTMAS RELEASE. JUST IMAGINE THAT IN YOUR STOCKING RATHER THAN WipeOut...

WIN! BABYLON 5: VOLS 1-8

Our continuing friendship with Beyond Vision and their classic movie and sci-fi label rushes onward, as we offer two sets of eight *Babylon 5* tapes to the first people to answer our question. If you haven't seen it (and as it's on at some stupid time in the afternoon, don't feel too pissed off), *Babylon 5* is set on a huge space station manned by square-jawed heroes who are employed to make sure shifty alien types toe the line. Needless to say, space battles and squabbling between races breaks out, and that's the plot. Well, the eight tapes we're offering covers the extended pilot and the fourteen episodes that followed. Only the first four tapes have been released to date, as as the tapes cost in the £11 region and are backed up with Dolby and all that gubbins, they're worth owning. Oh, and Walter Koenig (Chekov in *Star Trek*) is in one of them, but doesn't keep on about 'wessels.' The first two randomly-picked people to answer the following question, wins. Mark your entry **BABYLON 5 Competition (December Issue)**. Usual rules apply.

Name the new commander of *Babylon 5*

1. Sheridan
2. Kirk
3. Pertwee

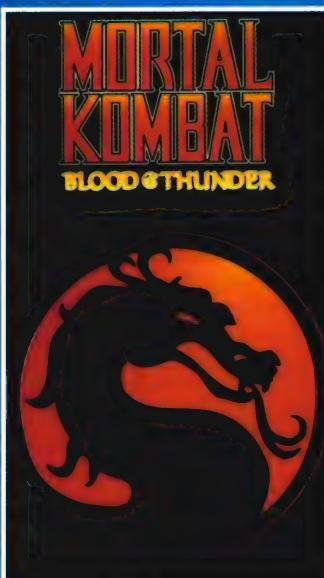


WIN! MORTAL KOMBAT KOMPENDIUMS

Titan Books have given us five of their *Mortal Kombat: Blood and Thunder* compilations to give away in celebration of the imminent release of *MKIII* for the PlayStation. *Blood and Thunder* tells of Shao Kahn's continuing plan to ransack Earth, and Sonya and co's attempts to break off the link between Kahn's Outworld and our little blue planet. There's loads of fighting, angst, and blood, which means it mimics the games perfectly. Except for the angst. To win one, answer the following question, and send it to the usual address marked **TITAN MORTAL KOMBAT Competition (December)**. Usual rules apply.

Name the half man, half horse boss in *MKIII*.

1. Goro
2. Motaro
3. Kano



WIN! FIVE PSX JOYPADS, FIVE PS PROPADS, FIVE HYPER JOYPADS, AND FIVE EXTENSION CABLES!

Yikes! Yes, thanks to those nice people at Fire International and the similarly beautiful Spectra Video folk, we have FIVE PlayStation Joypads, FIVE Hyper Joypads (both reviewed last issue) FIVE PS Propads, and FIVE joypad extension cables to give away. I know – incredible isn't it! And all you have to do to stand a chance of winning, is answer the following question: If you plugged two joypads into a PlayStation, how many buttons would you be able to press (including the PlayStation itself!) Answers on the back of a postcard to: Joypad Competition, PlayStation Plus, EMAP Images, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Winners will be drawn at random from correct entries.

MIRROR, MIRROR ON THE WALL..



..who is the sickest, baddest,
extra-terrestrial killer
of them all?

THIS IS A REFLECTION OF YOUR WORST FEARS

X-COM Enemy Unknown AVAILABLE NOW for the PlayStation



MICRO PROSE

Spectrum Holobyte - MicroProse World Wide Web Site: <http://www.microprose.com>

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Blood-soaked flesh ripped from chewed-up bone, followed by mangled intestines draped across a bed of twitching corpses. For dessert, rotting zombies shredded limb from limb by rusty chain-saws, garnished with a side order of shattered bone shards and lashings of gore. It is, quite simply, the perfect recipe for a three-course bloody feast. It's probably a vegetarian's nightmare but a game-player's wet dream. It, of course, is *Doom*.



The world is a strange place. While the starving millions of the third world fight over scraps of food, thousands of hopefuls back here in Blighty rely on six numbered ping-pong balls to provide their fortune. Even stranger, you can even speak to the Queen just by telephoning Buckingham Palace and asking for Liz.

Then there's the double standards of the video games censors. While they forbid crucifixes appearing in a game like *Worms*, they'll happily turn a blind eye to the satanic symbols decorating the grime-covered walls and rivers of blood and gore that flow freely in *Doom*.

And thank god for that. *Doom* has single-handedly changed the face of gaming, on the PC at least. If it wasn't for the collective genius of developer Id Software, the video game scene would be very different indeed. Just about every first-person shoot 'em up draws inspiration from *Doom* in some way and without such an influential predecessor, forthcoming titles like Acclaim's *Alien Trilogy* would be little more than over-ambitious ideas.

As a result *Doom* has been copied more times than your best mate's hardcore porn video, but few of the clones have managed to capture the sheer excitement of charging through dimly lit corridors, tearing through waves of demonic Imps with a double-barrelled shotgun and a handful of shells. It's a simple idea but like kinky sex, it's great fun, if a little messy.

After much blood-shed the original and arguably still the finest blast fights its way onto the PlayStation, amidst cries of this being the best version of *Doom* yet. Is this just excessive hyperbole or the plain and simple truth. Find out in the exclusive *PlayStation Plus* review over the page. In the mean time I wonder if Her Majesty is up for a quick Deathmatch..?

TO HELL AND BACK



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 4
RELEASE NOVEMBER
PRICE £44.99
BY GT INTERACTIVE
PLAYERS 1-2



Doom is a software whore. It's flaunted itself on just about every home computer format imaginable and has, if you'll pardon the expression, been around more times than a cheap call-girl riding a waltzer. It's caused wanton death, destruction and unrivalled enjoyment(!) wherever it reared its ugly head and it seems the carnage has only just begun.

This is the PlayStation incarnation of Id's classic gore-fest, and is in many ways very different from the various guises *Doom* has previously taken on. For starters it looks better than ever before, stuffed full of smart lighting effects PC owners can only dream of. It's also cram-packed with over 50 Satan-slaying levels, made up of all the best bits from the original *Doom* and its successor, *Doom II: Hell on Earth*. Bits from the latest instalment, *Ultimate Doom*, have also been mixed in for good measure.

Dragged into Hades to prevent the demonic hordes from over-throwing the Earth, you're the proverbial thorn in Beelzebub's backside as you wreak havoc in the bowels of Hell. Each catacomb of Satan's lair is plagued by fiendish traps and, unsurprisingly, thousands of his minions who roam that darkness, from the weedy fireball-spitting Imps to the infinitely more scary Cyberdemons. The overwhelming task of conquering bad boy Lucifer is made slightly easier thanks to an impressive array of weaponry found along the way, as well as numerous health top-ups and other bonuses.

In addition to the standard one-player game, two PlayStations can be linked together to either tackle the missions as a cooperative team or fight against one another in the awesome deathmatch mode. One word of warning though — relationships are easily destroyed by repeatedly nuking your partner with the BFG, so go easy on them and just use the rocket launcher.



LET THERE BE LIGHT

Ha, suck on this PC girls. The PlayStation version of *Doom* features some glorious lighting effects that help create a believable reality. For instance, step inside a lava room and the red glow will tint your gun, while lights flicker in the darkness to provide the perfect 'spooky' ambience. Now let's see *Doom* on your £2000 Pentium do that...



50% 100% 150%

HEALTH

ARMOR

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SHELLS

AMMO

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEALTH

ARMOR

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SHELLS

AMMO

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEALTH

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HEALTH

ARMOR

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SHELLS

MINE'S BIGGER THAN YOURS

The BFG-9000, or the Big Fu... yes, well, the unfathomably large gun is easily the most powerful weapon in *Doom*, drawing its energy from the plasma packs found scattered throughout each labyrinthian level. Guzzling a whopping 40 power cells for each shot, the BFG unleashes a stream of photon death which stretches out to engulf its target, obliterating all but the toughest demons with just one shot. Nearby monsties are also wounded in the blast, so it's possible to wipe out entire legions of Imps with a single blast.



HEAVEN CAN WAIT



ALL IS QUIET IN THE OPENING CHAMBER. HMM, WHAT'S THAT SWITCH DO?



AHA! A SET OF STEPS HAVE APPEARED, LEADING TO AN EXIT...



ARGH! AS SOON AS YOU STEP INTO THE DARKNESS A LOST SOUL ATTACKS!



CHASING THE SKULL OUTSIDE, USE THE SHOTGUN TO PUT OUT HIS FIRE.



UH-OH, HUGE BALLS OF FLAME DEAD AHEAD! WHAT ON EARTH SPAT THEM?



EEK! IT'S ROY HATTERSLEY! ER, HANG ON, IT'S ACTUALLY A MANCUBUS.



WELL, IT WAS. NOW IT'S JUST A GORY MESS. GOOD WORK, SHOTGUN.



OH HELL, MORE OF THEM PESKY LOST SOULS. DON'T THEY EVER GIVE UP?



OHMYGOD, IT'S THE CYBERDEMON! BREAK OUT THE BFG!



THE BFG'S WEAKENED HIM, NOW LET'S SEE IF HE LIKES ROCKET PIE...



HA! ONE FINAL BLAST AND HIS VITAL ORGANS INSTANTANEOUSLY EXPLODE!



WITH DEMON BLOOD DRIPPING FROM YOUR FACE, YOU HEAD FOR THE EXIT.

ROBOCOP

With RoboCop pursuing Clarence Boddicker and his gang, the kevlar-covered cop finds himself in the path of a charging van. As he scuttles out of the way, he reveals the 'Toxic Waste' sticker on the vat behind

him — which the van duly ploughs into. As the driver stumbles out, his flesh disintegrating, insult is added to his already-considerable injury as his boss runs his car straight over him...





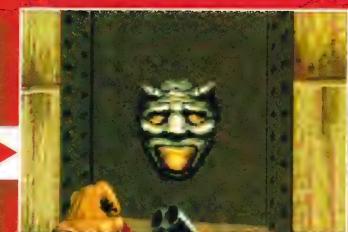
TAKE OUT THE LONE IMP WITH A SINGLE SHOTGUN BLAST.



CACODEMONS SLOWLY Emerge FROM THE WALLS AS YOU WALK ON.



FIRST THERE WAS ONE, NOW THERE ARE LOADS! OPEN FIRE!



WITH DEMONS DONE AND DUSTED, YOU MAY AS WELL HIT THE SWITCH.

COMMENT

STEVE

I never really got into *Doom* in its

PC incarnations, and my first real fumbling with Id's classic was with the crappy Sega 32X version. As such, a sorrowful a confession as it is, I came to this PlayStation conversion wanting to be impressed. Thankfully, with the original's gameplay surviving perfectly, and with light effects and stunning music and sound added to the original ideas, PlayStation *Doom* has blown me away. The atmosphere generated by the dark, barely lit stages is beyond belief, and the game challenge is constant as new weapons and monsters are introduced. Similarly, wandering through its many levels is rendered even more sinister due to the realistic controls — you can even hide behind walls and pick off foes. This is a genuine PlayStation classic and — gasp! — the best version to date.



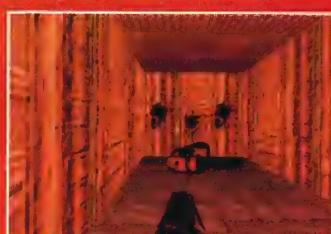
USING THE YELLOW KEY TO OPEN THE DOOR, MEDI-KITS GALORE AWAIT...



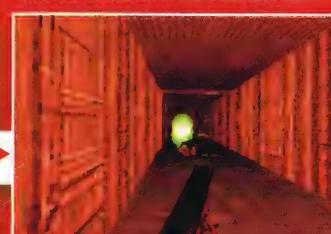
FEELING THOROUGHLY REPLENISHED, YOU GO STRAIGHT FOR THE RED KEY.



AS SOON AS YOU GRAB THE KEY, HUNDREDS OF IMPS INSTANTLY APPEAR!



YES! AT LAST YOU GET YOUR GRUBBY LITTLE MITTS ON THE CHAINSAW!



BUT WAIT, IT'S A TRICK! AMIDST A GREEN CLOUD, A DEMON APPEARS...



IT'S A BARON OF HELL! WORSE STILL, YOU'VE GOT NOWHERE TO RUN!

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO...

Bored with blasting Beelzebub's minions? No longer excited by the thought of fragging Mancubus ass? What you need is Deathmatch. By simply linking two PlayStations together using a serial cable, competing players can fight against each other on any of the 54 levels! Alternatively you can join forces and tackle each and every stage as a team. On second thoughts, frying your best mate with the BFG is much more fun.



THIS ROOM IS PACKED WITH NASTIES, SO KEEP QUIET...



AH, AN INVINCIBILITY SPHERE. THINGS ARE LOOKING UP AT LAST.

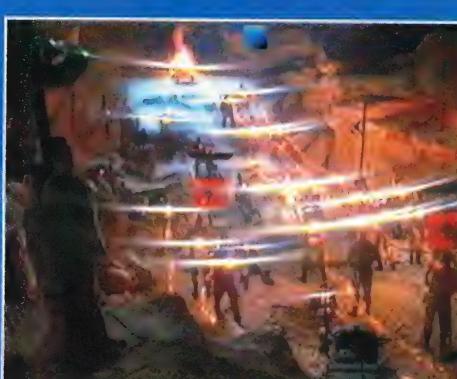


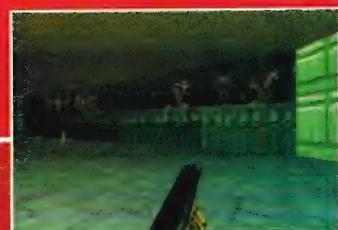
NOTHING CAN TOUCH ME NOW, DEMON FIEND FROM HADES!

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK

Indy has been pipped to the Ark of the Covenant by his Nazi foes, who are revelling in the seemingly benign spirits it is unleashing. However as the Herr Flick lookalike stares into the face of one such spirit, it

morphs into an evil demon, and a beam of light immediately pierces the Nazi hordes, killing them all. As the two main protagonists watch in fear, their faces melt in the heat — all this in a PG film, too...





STAY WELL BACK AND SHOOT THE IMPs WITH THE SHOTGUN.



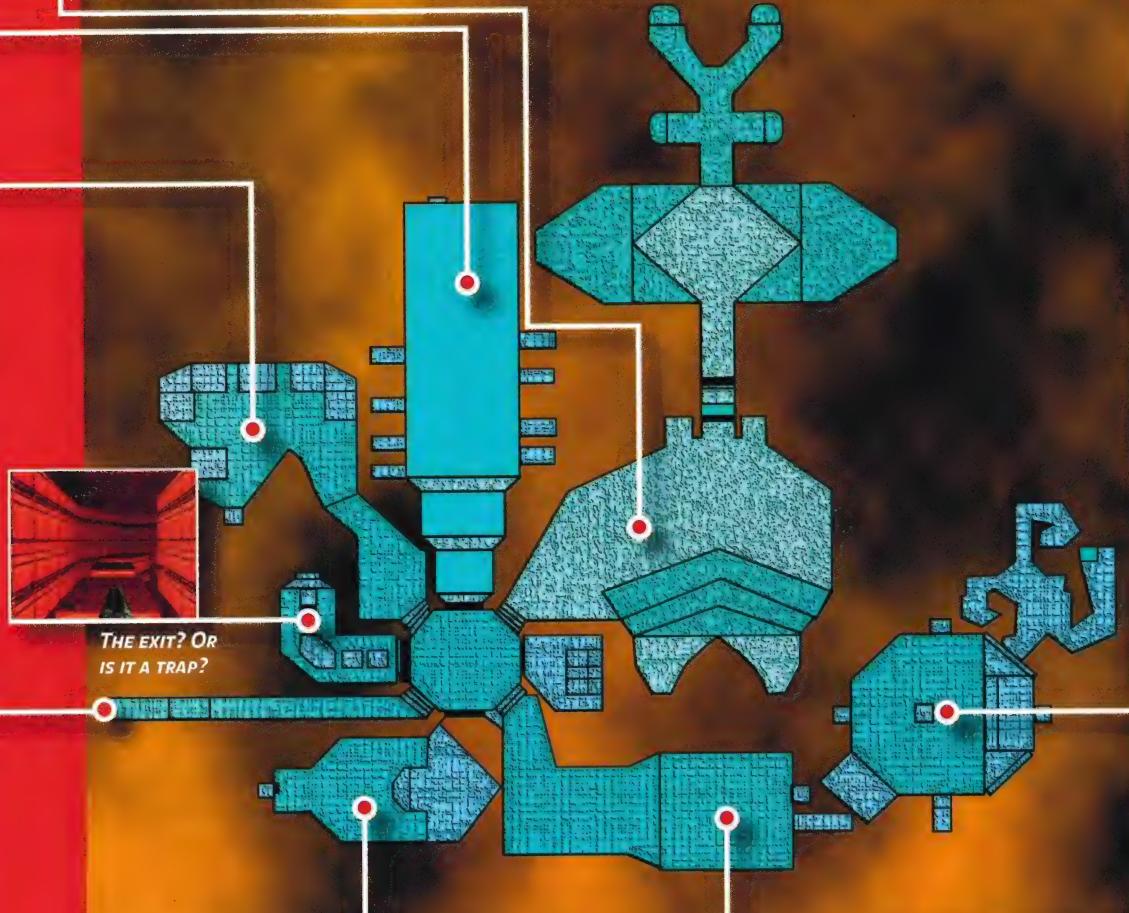
TWO WALL-MOUNTED SWITCHES OPEN THE DOOR LEADING UP.



INSIDE, YET MORE IMPs ATTACK, EAGER TO PROTECT A NEARBY BFG.



EXCELLENT, SOME EXTRA AMMO FOR YOUR RECENTLY-ACQUIRED BFG.



THE EXIT? OR IS IT A TRAP?

THE FIRST CHAMBER IS FILLED WITH TWO TELEPORTERS...

...BOTH OF WHICH LEAD TO A IMP-INFESTED HALL. KILL!

UNDERNEATH THE HALL IS A HIDDEN CHAMBER, FILLED WITH GOODIES.



ALL THAT REMAINS NOW IS TO PLUCK THE KEY FROM THE GORE. URK.



THIS ROOM'S CRAM-PACKED WITH IMPs - LET 'EM HAVE IT!



SURPRISE! SUDDENLY MORE DEMONS ATTACK FROM BEHIND.

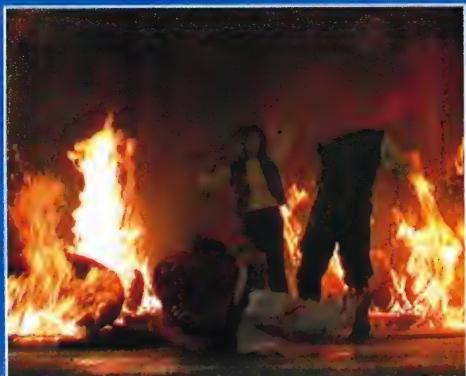


HAVING DESTROYED THE IMPs, ANOTHER SWITCH IS REVEALED.

INTERVIEW WITH A VAMPIRE

Pretty-boy Brad Pitt's Louis character is a bit choked to see his companions killed, and goes crazy-ape with a scythe. As Stephen Rea's Santiago character faces him, a fight starts – only to end with a seem-

ingly harmless swipe of the scythe. As Santiago stands there, a gash appears and the top half of his body slides back at an angle before dropping to the ground in a mushy pile. Cool.



DOOM

SOMETHING FOR THE WEEKEND, SIR?

It's not all wham, blam, thank-you ma'am. Running around maniacally blasting everything with the double-barrelled shotgun will only get you so far, and exploiting the enemies' weaknesses is vital to overall success. Therefore learn to use the right weapon for the job.



Kick start the chainsaw and charge into combat, carving up the Bull Demons before they sink their teeth in.



Cacodemons are easily dealt with using either the double-barrelled shotgun or the meaty chain gun.



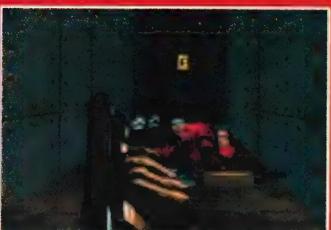
A hail of rockets or a stream of blasts from the plasma gun should make mincemeat of the Barons of Hell.



Blow this fat git to pieces with a few well-aimed double-barrel shotgun blasts.



Side-step the Arachnotron's stream of plasma blasts and crush the beast's over-sized brain with a couple of high-explosive rockets.



Use the shotgun against the zombie troops and the slightly tougher flame-chucking Imps.



A single blast from the double-barrelled shotgun should extinguish this Lost Soul's fire.

ANSWERS PLEASE...

Michael Abbot,
Producer, Williams
Entertainment.

PSP: How did the deal between Id and Williams Entertainment arise?

MA: Well we're practically based next door to Id so that's why! No, we've had a long-term relationship with the guys and it sort of developed from there.

PSP: So presumably you worked closely with Id?

MA: Very closely indeed. They often came in and helped if we had any problems. They supervised.

PSP: In that case, who decided which levels featured in the PlayStation version of *Doom*?

MA: We actually picked the levels ourselves. We went through all the levels from *Doom* and *Doom II* and chose the ones we thought were the best.

PSP: Did you make any changes to the levels?

MA: Not in their actual design, although we did make use of the PlayStation's light-sourcing capabilities. The soundtrack was also written from scratch and some of the sound effects were changed. Other than that we tried to keep it as close to the PC as possible.

PSP: Ah, but doesn't the PlayStation version include a brand new secret stage called 'Club Doom'?

MA: Yeah, that's true. But I can't tell you about it.

PSP: Not even a hint as to its location?

MA: Nope.

PSP: Bah.

COMMENT

ALEX

I've played *Doom* to (ahem) death,

having waded through both the original and its sequel when they first appeared on the PC. I was therefore more than familiar with the PlayStation version which is essentially an amalgamation of the two, combining some of the best levels from each as well as all the monsters and weapons. The result is arguably the best version of *Doom* yet. Admittedly, a bold statement to make but one which is perfectly justifiable considering it has the same addictive qualities of the PC original and is just as instantly appealing. This is partly due to the responsive joypad controls, which are straightforward and prove effective even in the bloodiest battle. Graphically *Doom* is very impressive indeed, scrolling smoothly with only the occasional hint of slowdown. The lighting effects are also smart, adding atmosphere along with the eerie soundtrack. It's the adrenaline rush gained from fighting Satan's foulest demons that makes *Doom* so unique, and as a one-player blast it remains unbeatable. As for Deathmatch, games this good should be illegal.

RATING

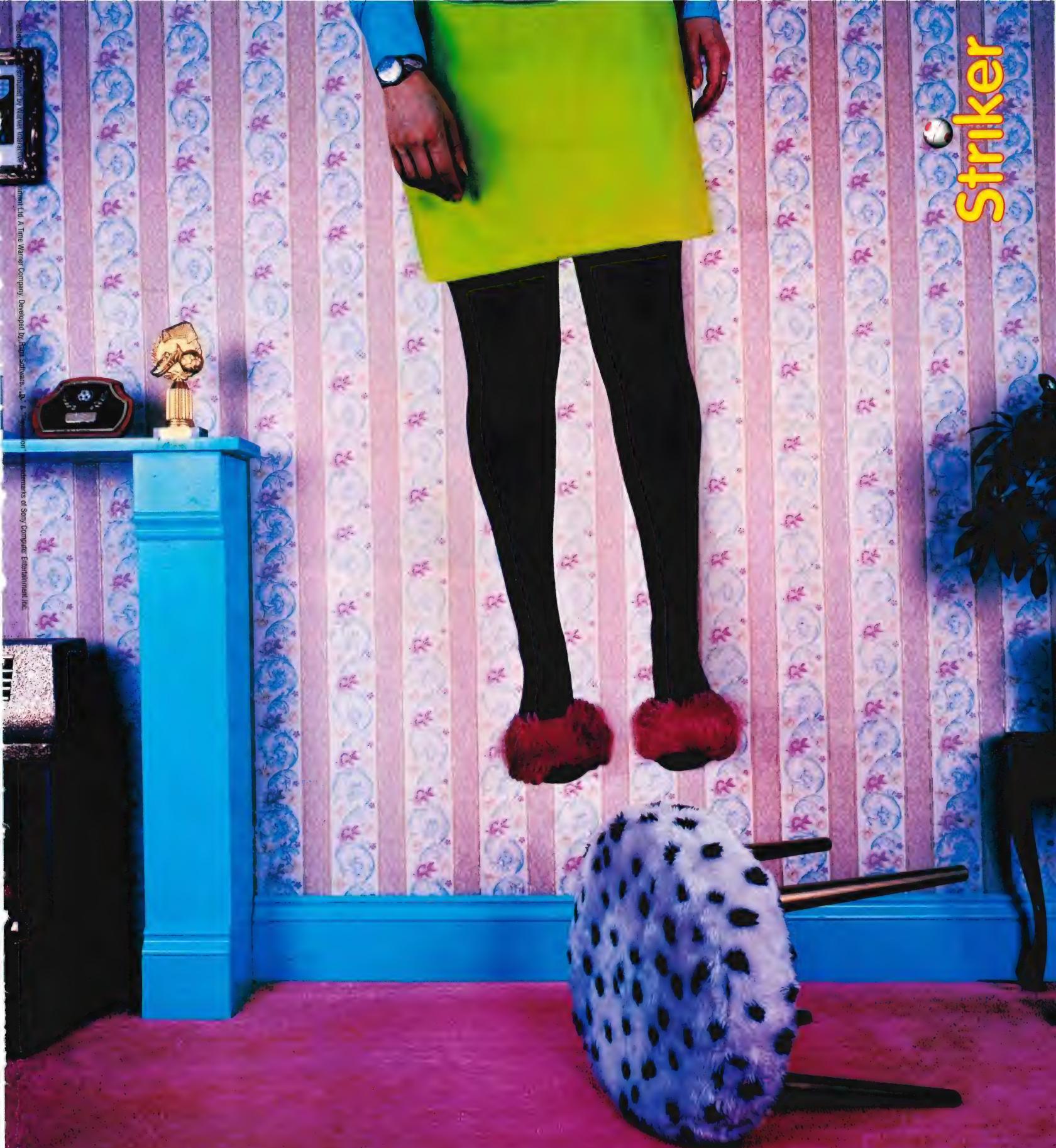
GRAPHICS	91
ANIMATION	85
SOUND FX	87
MUSIC	89
LASTABILITY	90
PLAYABILITY	94
OVERALL	92

THE LAST BOY SCOUT

Joe Hallenbeck (Bruce Willis) is involved in a climactic fight with the big bad guy's chief henchman (ie the bloke he kills second to last) on top of a sports centre's floodlight. With a SWAT team helicopter popping shots from above, Willis smacks

his foe in the gob, and the SWAT team pepper the bad guy with bullets as he reels away. Because he's such a bad bloke, he then pitches over the side of the floodlight and into the rotor blades of the SWAT helicopter!





The brilliance of football. Just imagine it 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.

Football, football, football. Women are right, men have only got one thing on their mind. But then nothing else is likely

to get a look in with Striker '96. (Awarded 93% and called "Addictive, enjoyable, orgasmic fun" by Gamepro. While Dave Perry of Gamemaster TV said: "Striker '96, PlayStation soccer game of the year. Official!) It captures all the thrills and excitement of football and is even more absorbing than the game itself, with ultra smooth panning angles, perfectly animated players and unbelievably fast 3-D graphics. It's definitely a black armband day. "Too right, Arsenal have lost again!"



RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION



Let's face facts, the PlayStation is swamped by racing games, some good, some not so good. So why another? The reason is quite simple. Because there's always room for improvement, and as developers experiment with Sony's super-console its capabilities can be pushed to the very limits. After all, if the next generation of PlayStation titles aren't going to be better than *WipeOut* and *Destruction Derby* et al, what's the point?

Thankfully Namco acknowledge this fact, and as result *Ridge Racer Revolution* is expected to wheel out of the pit lane in the not too distant future. It's quite obviously a sequel to the established *Ridge Racer*, still one of the PlayStation's flagship titles, but one that looks just a little dated against the rendered gloss of the super-slick *WipeOut*. But not for much longer.

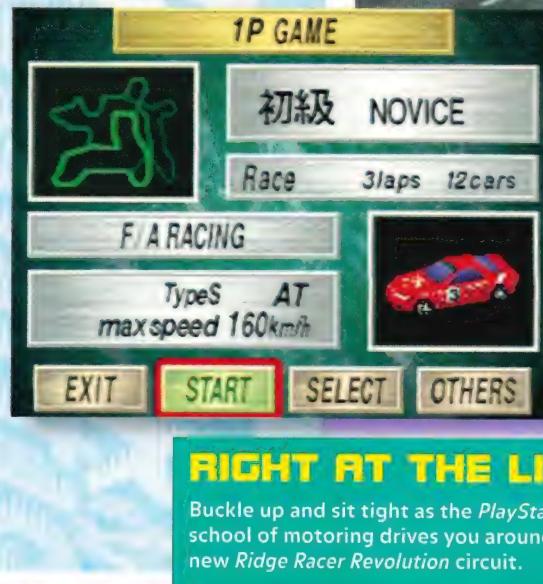
Ridge Racer Revolution is a giant leap forwards in terms of presentation, gameplay... well, just about everything really. Visually it's smoother, faster and more detailed, there are loads of new techno dance tunes to groove on down to and rather than the original's meagre one circuit, *Ridge Racer Revolution* boasts more tracks than a Ronco Christmas Classics album.

But the thing that's making the PlayStation Plus crew go all gooey is the link-up option. Sitting alone in front of your television is geeky. Get some PlayStation pals around, link your machines and play as one big happy family. Soon the hallowed PlayStation will unite gamers from around the globe so come on, let's join hands, link machines and bond...

RELEASE	SEPTEMBER '96
PRICE	TBA
BY	NAMCO
PLAYERS	1-2
GENRE	RACING

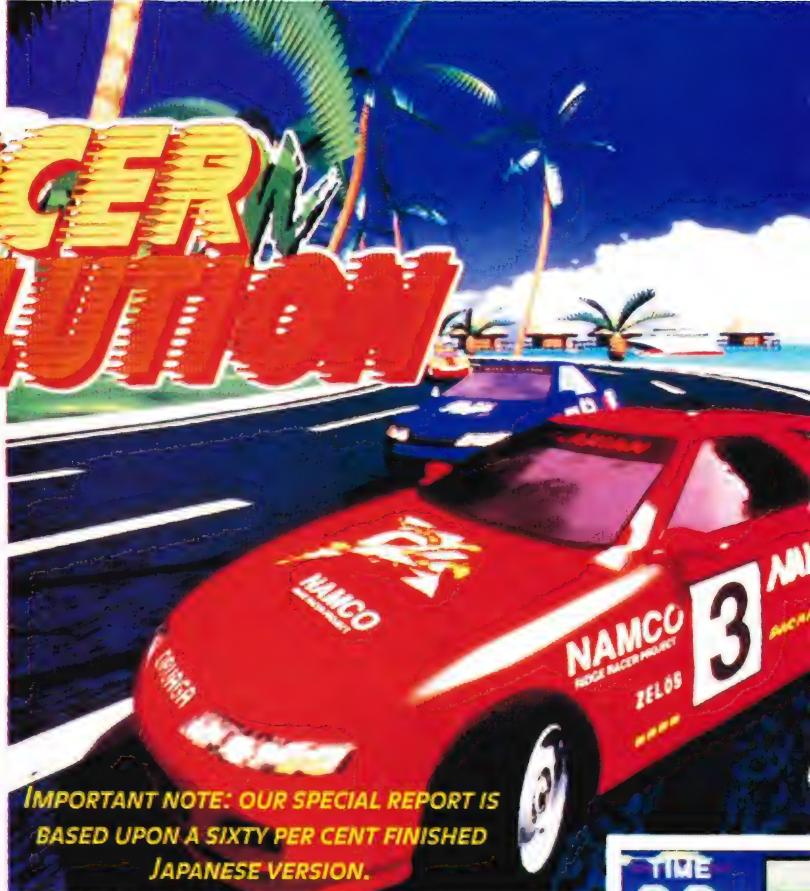
IT'S GOT GUT BEAT, JAH?

Ever seen the commercials on MTV advertising the German techno compilations? If so then you'll know what to expect of *Ridge Racer Revolution* in terms of ear-splitting hardcore house. Yup, there are 11 new tunes to rave along to, from the squillion beats-per-minute madness of *Lords of Techno* to the more sedate but equally dance-worthy *Speedster Overheat*. Er, slammin', as some drugged-up clubber once said. Probably.



RIGHT AT THE LIGHTS

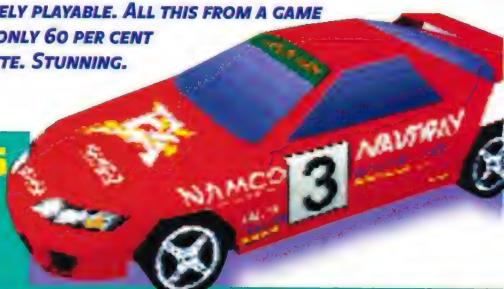
Buckle up and sit tight as the PlayStation Plus school of motoring drives you around the all-new *Ridge Racer Revolution* circuit.



IMPORTANT NOTE: OUR SPECIAL REPORT IS BASED UPON A SIXTY PER CENT FINISHED JAPANESE VERSION.



RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION IS VERY FAST INDEED, AND SCROLLS SMOOTHLY EVEN WHEN THE TRACK IS JAM-PACKED WITH CARS. BETTER STILL, IT'S EXTREMELY PLAYABLE. ALL THIS FROM A GAME THAT'S ONLY 60 PER CENT COMPLETE. STUNNING.

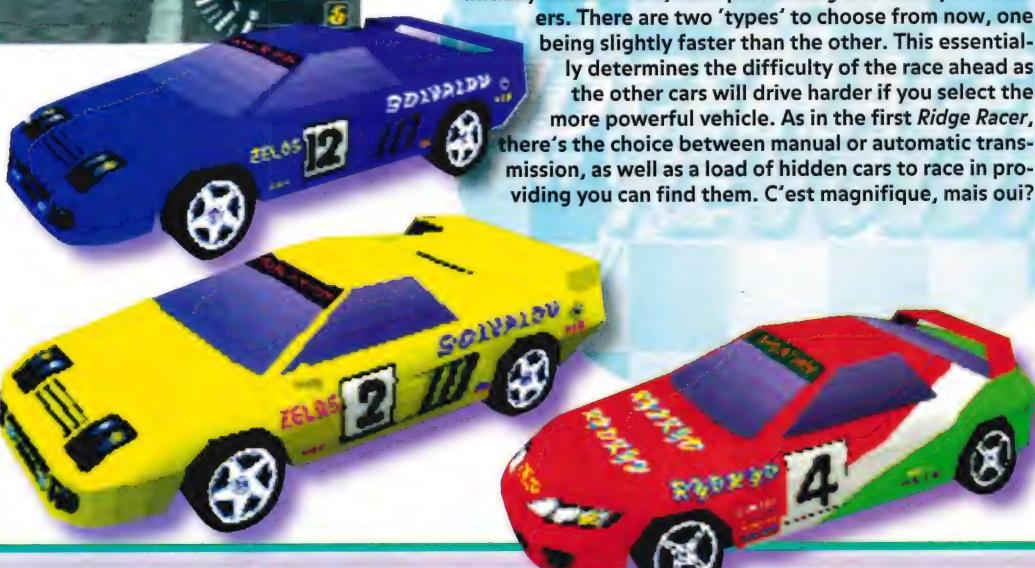
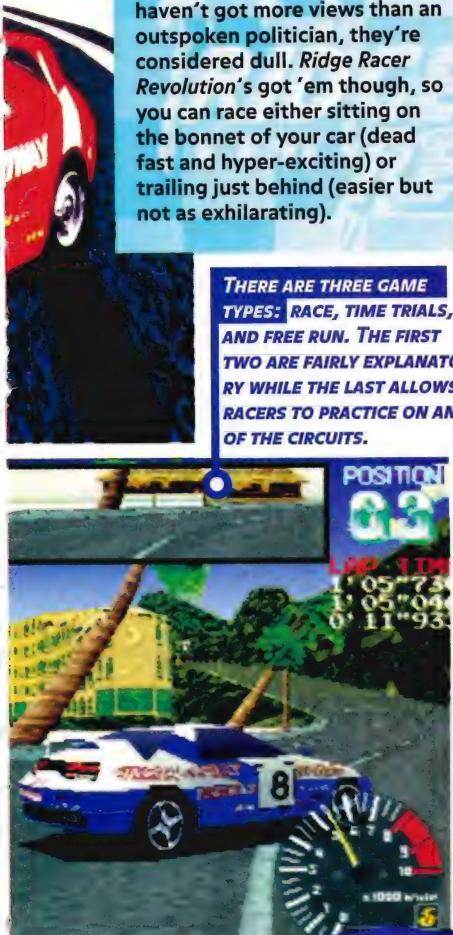


AS THE RACE PROGRESSES
THE SUN SLOWLY SETS OVER
THE HORIZON, CASTING THE
TRACK IN SHADOW.
STRANGELY IT'S BACK FOR
THE NEXT LAP, SCORCHING
DOWN LIKE A VERY HOT
FRIED EGG. ERR.

CHASE ME

Racing games, eh. If they haven't got more views than an outspoken politician, they're considered dull. *Ridge Racer Revolution*'s got 'em though, so you can race either sitting on the bonnet of your car (dead fast and hyper-exciting) or trailing just behind (easier but not as exhilarating).

THERE ARE THREE GAME TYPES: RACE, TIME TRIALS, AND FREE RUN. THE FIRST TWO ARE FAIRLY EXPLANATORY WHILE THE LAST ALLOWS RACERS TO PRACTICE ON ANY OF THE CIRCUITS.



PICK 'N' MIX

If you're familiar with *Ridge Racer* you'll undoubtedly recognise the cars in *Ridge Racer Revolution*. That's because they're basically the same. There are still four to initially choose from, each performing differently the others. There are two 'types' to choose from now, one being slightly faster than the other. This essentially determines the difficulty of the race ahead as the other cars will drive harder if you select the more powerful vehicle. As in the first *Ridge Racer*, there's the choice between manual or automatic transmission, as well as a load of hidden cars to race in providing you can find them. C'est magnifique, mais oui?

TWO-COURSE MEAL

One of the main criticisms aimed at *Ridge Racer* was its lack of tracks. There was only a single course after all, which is a bit pathetic by anyone's standards. *Ridge Racer Revolution* includes the original track but also boasts a brand new circuit. Better still, like the first game there are three variations of both the tracks, making a grand total of, um... hang on... two courses, each with three variations. That makes... six! The new circuit again stretches along a sun-drenched shoreline, it's speedy straights and testing hairpins cutting through sheer-faced canyons and past tropical beaches lined with palm trees. Additionally you can race around a mirror-image of each circuit, essentially doubling the fun again!



COMPLETE THE RACE AND YOU'RE TREATED TO A VICTORY LAP FROM VARIOUS DIFFERENT CAMERA ANGLES. SMART.

ANOTHER OF RIDGE RACER REVOLUTION'S NEW FEATURES IS THE INCLUSION OF A DEAD-HANDY REAR VIEW MIRROR.

GOLDEN OLDIE

Again Namco dive into the swag bag of video game history and pluck out another classic. This time the lucky Ridge Racers can play ace shoot 'em up *Galaga '88* while their favourite speed-thrill loads in the background. Not only does this provide a few minutes of tension-relieving blasting, it also 'affects' the game depending on your performance. Hmm...



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PAL

RELEASE	JANUARY
PRICE	TBA
BY	SCE
PLAYERS	1-8
GENRE	SPORT SIM



BA Jam (reviewed in Issue 1) was the first basketball game to make it on to the PlayStation and jolly good it is too. However,

in Total NBA '96 it could well have found some competition to sweat it out with.

Total NBA manages to differentiate itself from its rival by going for a more realistic edge. The first thing that strikes you are the phenomenal graphics, realistically rendering just about every player from every team in the NBA. Unlike NBA Jam, Total NBA isn't simply a two-on-two game, using instead full teams and catering for as many as eight players with the aid of a multi-tap. Naturally it contains leagues and play-off tournaments, player stats and the like, and all this comes wrapped up in television-style presentation includes an elaborate replay system and loads of camera angles to choose from.

Total NBA is due out in the new year and Sony are keen on ensuring that it shares the flagship mantle with the likes of Ridge Racer and Tekken. From what we've seen and played of the game it looks like a definite winner. What's more, it's the kind of game that even people who aren't big on basketball will find easy to get into. For now, gape lovingly at some slick shots from the game.



THESE BASKETBALL STARS CAN PULL OFF ALL MANNER OF DUNKS FROM THE SLAM BEHIND THE HEAD TO THE LEAPING ONE-HANDER. IT'S EVEN POSSIBLE TO CRASH THE BOARDS SO THE GLASS SHATTERS OVER THE COURT.



Total NBA '96

DUNKING! GO NUTS!

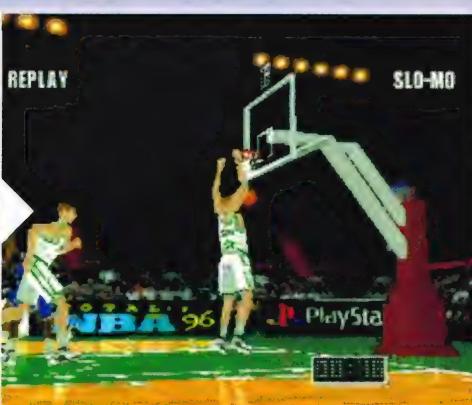
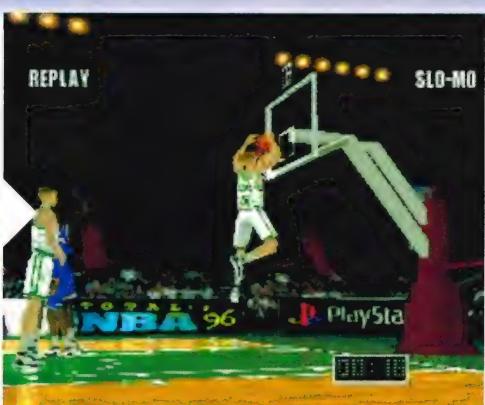
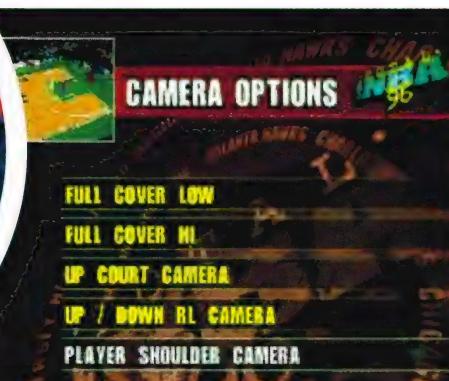
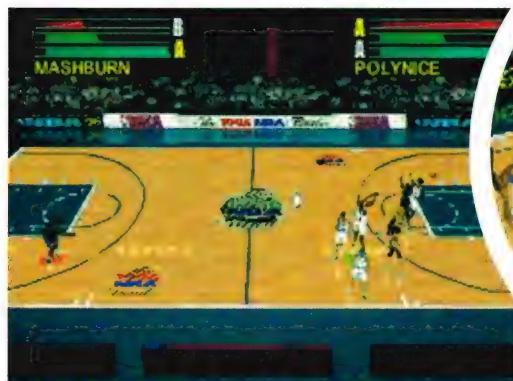
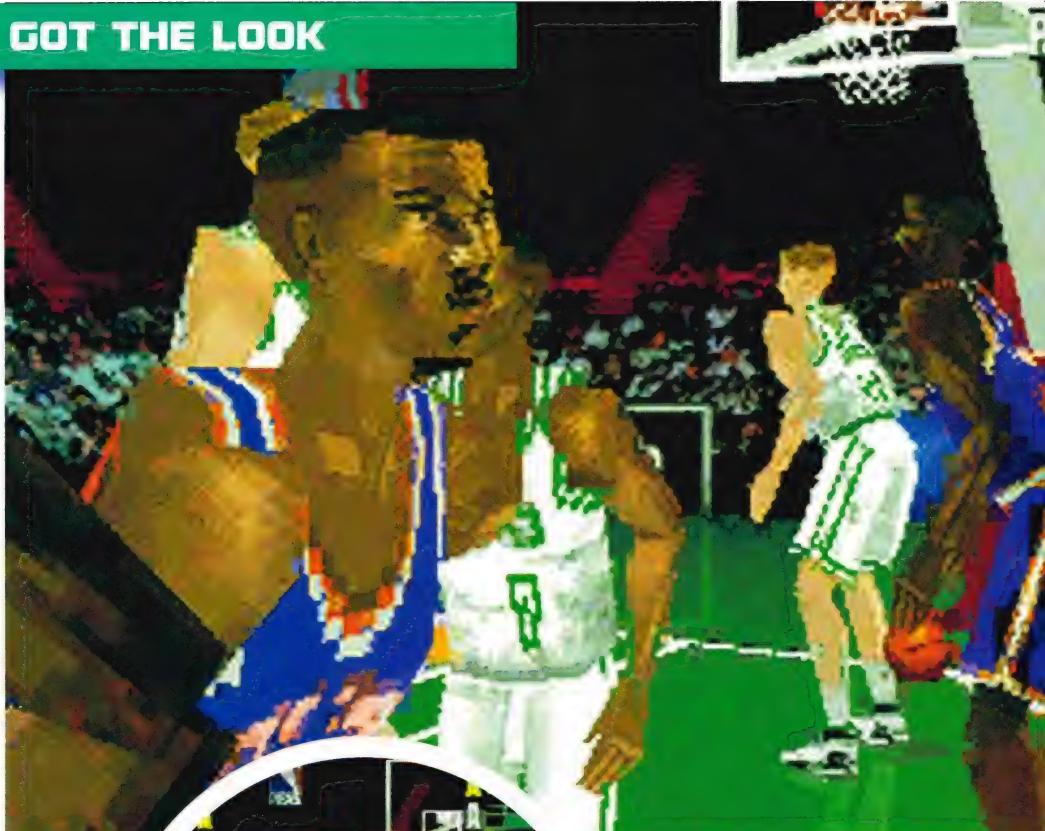
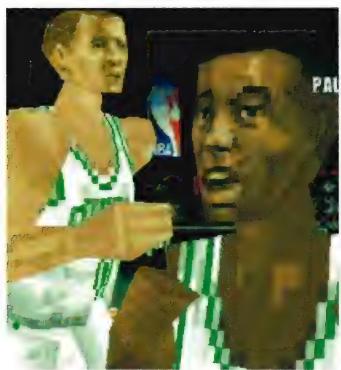
There are few things in this world as serenely beautiful as a slam dunk. Unlike NBA Jam where players launch 20 feet into the air doing rolls and spins, the dunks in Total NBA are relatively down to earth. They're far from boring

though, featuring 360° spins, back dunks, step dunks and hang dunks. And they're all brilliantly animated as well. Also most are shown on an automatic replay so you can savour them. Here's a few shots to give you an idea...



YOU'VE GOT THE LOOK

Total NBA comes with a whole range of camera angles to choose from. There are the usual overhead and side on angles, but it's also possible to use a roving camera that swings about the action zooming in and out. Total NBA even contains a feature whereby the action is paused and you can saunter about the court right in to the faces of the players, which are, incidentally, all rendered to look uniquely like their real life counterparts.





HERE WE SEE A CLEVER PASSING MOVE BEING EXECUTED, FOLLOWED BY A LAY UP DUNK.

FRENCH POLISHERS?

Just how good the graphics are you can obviously see for yourself. What you won't be able to experience is the breathtaking animation. Using motion capture technology the players move incredibly smoothly and realistically, making things like dunks

all the more satisfying. The number of polygons being moved per second is about 210,000 which knocks the socks off even the likes of *Tekken*. The icing on the cake though has to be the reflections of the lights and the players off the highly polished court.



KEEP YOUR EYES ON THE GUY IN THE WHITE. HE SLIPS THE BALL BEHIND HIS BACK, MOVES PAST THE DEFENDER AND IS SET UP TO EXECUTE A LAY UP AND EARN THE CELTICS TWO POINTS. WELL DONE THAT MAN!

NOW HERE'S A SPECTACULAR DUNK! JUST INSIDE THE KEY AND WITH NO DEFENDERS TO CONTEND WITH, IT'S TIME TO GET FLASH WITH A STUNNING LEAPING SLAM DUNK. RADICAL, AS I BELIEVE THE SAYING GOES.

AS EXPECTED

As you'd have every right to expect from a sports sim, *Total NBA* features not only all of the teams from the NBA divisions but a league and the play offs. Not only that but each player has a rating based on their defensive and offensive capabilities. Have a quick look to see if the player about to take a three-pointer is any good at shooting in the first place. Players are all fitted with turbo as well which makes them faster, more agile and more

capable of brushing off opponents. The drawback is that this eats away at a players stamina.

DALLAS MAVERICKS			
POSITION: G/F	SHIRT NO: 1	F/G AVERAGE: 0.53	F/G AVERAGE: 0.47
HEIGHT: 5' 11"	WEIGHT: 185	YRS AS PRO: 7	YRS AS PRO: 7
SCOTT BROOKS			



FREE THROWS ARE EXECUTED BY FINDING THE CENTRE OF THE LEFT-RIGHT, UP-DOWN GAUGE.

OFF-WORD INTERCEPTOR

canyon shredding

fest

It's 26 levels of car-to-car combat. Customize buffed monster-stompers with trick engines and air-grabbing jump jets.



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Available on the PlayStation™ game console.

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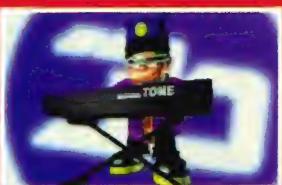
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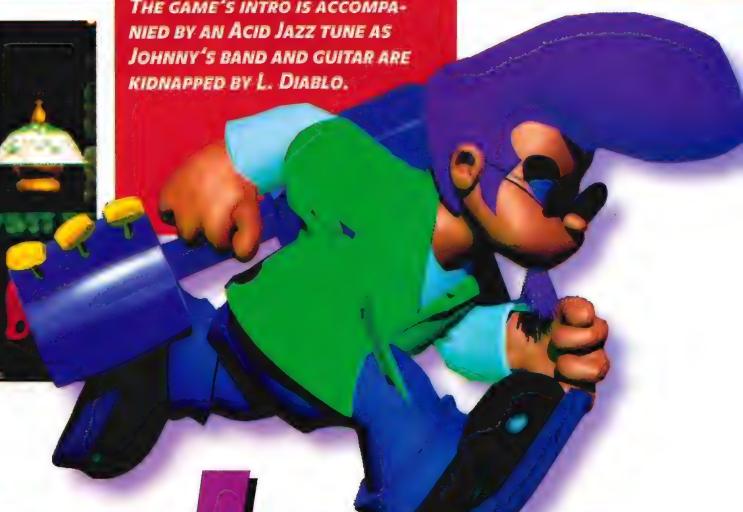




RELEASE	FEBRUARY
PRICE	£44.99
BY	US GOLD
PLAYERS	1
GENRE	PLATFORM



THE GAME'S INTRO IS ACCOMPANIED BY AN ACID JAZZ TUNE AS JOHNNY'S BAND AND GUITAR ARE KIDNAPPED BY L. DIABLO.

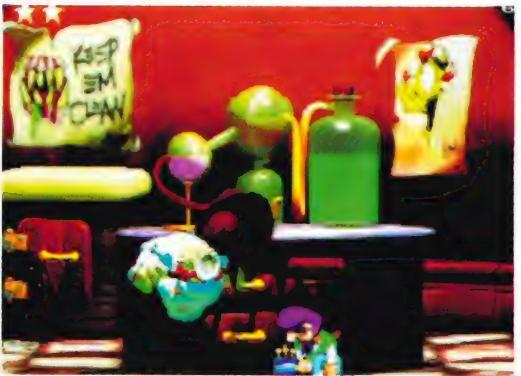
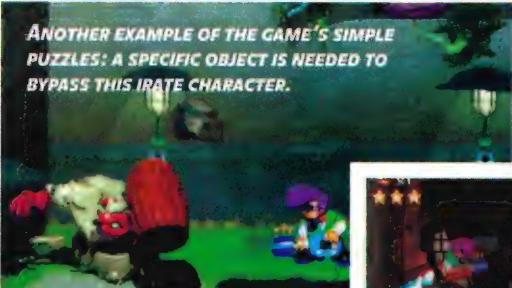


Johnny Bazookatone

In the wake of the less than innovative *Rayman*, it now falls to Birmingham-based US Gold to introduce a new platform hero to the PlayStation. With our main complaint with UBI Soft's hero being that it was all-too familiar and hardly stretching the machine, US Gold's offering is a fully-rendered extravaganza, with the pink-quiffed rocker hero leaping to and fro across light-sourced levels built up with intricate detail.

Set in 2050, Earth is a very different place. Music has done what countless UN envoys and peace-keeping forces had failed to do, and united the world, making it a generally happy place to be. The leading purveyor of such pacifying music is one Johnny Bazookatone and his band, who has become a legend even more popular than Elvis Presley, The Beatles and Five Star. With peace prevailing, the forces of darkness are less than busy, and the devil himself — now calling himself L. Diablo in keeping with a smoother image — is less than pleased, and plans to kidnap Johnny and his band to unbalance the world and get it back to its bad old ways.

However, even the best laid plans often go awry, and the kidnapping is bungled, with Diablo snatching the band and Johnny's beloved guitar, Anita, but leaving our hero behind in the confusion. Thus, with the God-awful scenario set, it falls to the player to guide Johnny through the said rendered stages in an attempt to free his band, rescue his guitar and give Diablo a firm pasting. Nothing changes, does it...





ALL THIS AND PUZZLES, TOO...

In the heady world of video game magazine publishing a common quote we hear is "ah, but it's a (add game genre here) with a difference – it's got puzzle elements, too." In fact, if I had a pound for every time I'd heard that phrase, I'd be able to buy a new pair of jeans. Still, in the time-honoured fashion we're told that *Johnny Bazookatone* is indeed a platform game with puzzle elements, and to be fair they're not lying. As Johnny wanders through Diablo's domain certain areas are locked and – you can guess can't you? – require a key in order to pass through. Similarly, one stage contains a chef who refuses to allow Johnny past unless he is appeased with a certain object first.

THE LIGHT-SOURCED SPRITES ARE SMALL BUT ATTRACTIVE.



DANGER: CONTAGION



In keeping with *Johnny Bazookatone*'s traditional values, *Diablo* has established several larger sprites to act as 'boss' creatures at the end of key stages. However, far from being an all-too-familiar Super NES scenario whereby the player jumps on the large sprite's head until it keels over, Arc have added a stroke of genius to the action, with genuine planning needed to usurp the over-sized dancers and chefs in *Diablo*'s employ. Dotted throughout the stages preceding the boss are what appear to be puffer fish but are in fact enlarged viral strains. These viruses must first be stunned with a few well-placed shots from Johnny's gun/guitar, and then sucked into the weapon which also seems to double up as a vacuum cleaner-cum-virus container! With several of the virus sprites stashed away, they are then shot into the face of the errant boss until he gives up the ghost.

HELL'S KITCHEN

Johnny's trip to L. Diablo's penthouse domain spans over thirty stages, with Johnny picking his way through a prison, a hotel owned by the demonic kidnapper, a morgue, and onwards through night clubs, restaurants and hospitals. Each stage is inhabited by Diablo's hell-spawned associates who home in on our hero, swoop from above and generally make a nuisance of themselves. Johnny's health is measured by a coloured bar at the bottom of the screen, and is reduced with every hit conceded. As can be expected, though, Johnny is far from

unarmed and comes equipped with his second-favourite guitar which, rather bizarrely doubles up as a gun. In addition, another favourite attack of Johnny's is a spin attack which wipes out anything in the vicinity. In an attempt to add extra variety to the proceedings, developers Arc have also thrown in a few old platform stalwarts for good measure, with Johnny taking a trip in a cart (which looks like a bath chair), swinging on light fittings (phew, rock 'n' roll, eh), and collecting musical notes for extra bonuses.



COMPANY	INTERPLAY
RELEASE	JANUARY
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1
GENRE	PLATFORM



Casper: *The Friendly Ghost* is a film I've unfortunately not had the pleasure of seeing. What I can gather from those unfortunates who have been dragged along to it by children or soppy girlfriends is that it's cute, cuddly and full of wholesome values. One for all the family as they say. You can be pretty sure then that the game is going to go for the same soft-centred style, and predictably enough Casper does. There's not a testosterone totting warrior or chainsaw massacre in sight.

Instead, Casper sees the amiable little spirit of death wandering through a vast mansion with the express intention of making some living, breathing friends. As he floats supernaturally from room to room, the plan is to fit together various little puzzles, pick up keys to open chests and doors, and search for pieces of the Lazarus machine which will transform Casper back into a flesh and blood kid.

Being a ghost has its advantages though, and Casper makes the most of them, morphing into a host of different things. For example, when he learns the art of dissipating into smoke, he can travel through the grates in the walls in search of hidden clues to the puzzle he's presently tackling. As fans of the film will know, Casper's task is made all the more burdensome with the presence of his three uncles, each out to make the little fella's life a misery by causing endless mischief.

Bless 'em!



Casper



DEAD WEIGHTS

Among the pick-ups on offer, there are sandwiches that keep Casper healthy, a variety of vegetables like carrots and asparagus, and fruit like apples. As the rule goes, it's best to pick up

everything no matter how odd. For example, huge weights keep turning up, and while it may seem a bit pointless to keep lugging these about you'll find they come in useful later on.



DOOR TO THE OTHER SIDE

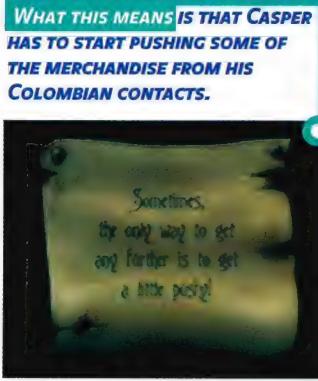
A ghost he might be, but Casper is not at liberty to wander through any door that is locked. Like mortals, he has to find a key. Well, actually, this isn't strictly true. You see, with the regular doors he can float above them and move through the walls. But with green, blue and purple doors Casper has to find a colour corresponding key. This then opens up new rooms to explore. Likewise with chests that might contain something useful, Casper needs to hunt down a gold key.



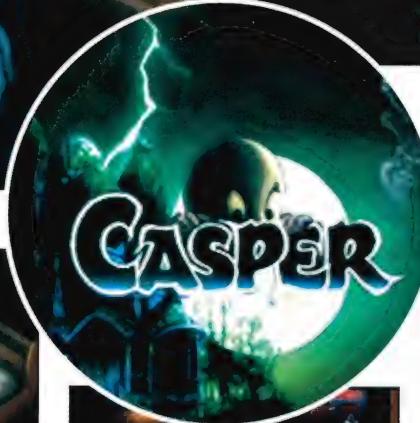
PUZZLING

SPIRITS

Casper incorporates a lot of diverting little tasks for the transparent white fella to undertake. For example, right at the start there is a portrait of one of the family ghosts to assemble. There are four pieces in all and each is hidden somewhere about the house. There are also cryptic clues knocking about that inform Casper about skills he can acquire or ways to progress from room to room. These are normally written on parchment hiding behind a painting and are discovered by activating a switch.



IF YOU LEAVE CASPER IDLE HE GETS OUT HIS CAP AND SHADES AND DOES A BIT OF POSING. WHAT A COOL GHOST, AND A GREAT IMAGE FOR ALL THE KIDS OUT THERE.



CASPER PEEKS DOWN FROM THE BALCONY TO TAKE A LOOK AT THE TWO STRANGERS. WHAT HE DOESN'T KNOW IS THAT THEY HAVE A DISEASE RENDERING THEM INCAPABLE OF ANYTHING BUT C & A POSES.

DARK StALKERS

COMPANY	VIRGIN
RELEASE	JANUARY
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-2
GENRE	BEAT 'EM UP



arkStalkers — the warriors of the night.

People tremble in fear of these monsters.

A mysterious force awakens them from their long slumber.

"Arise and show your fangs!"

The silence of night is broken by the growls and roars of these evil spirits which have been summoned from beyond.

They are coming — tonight!

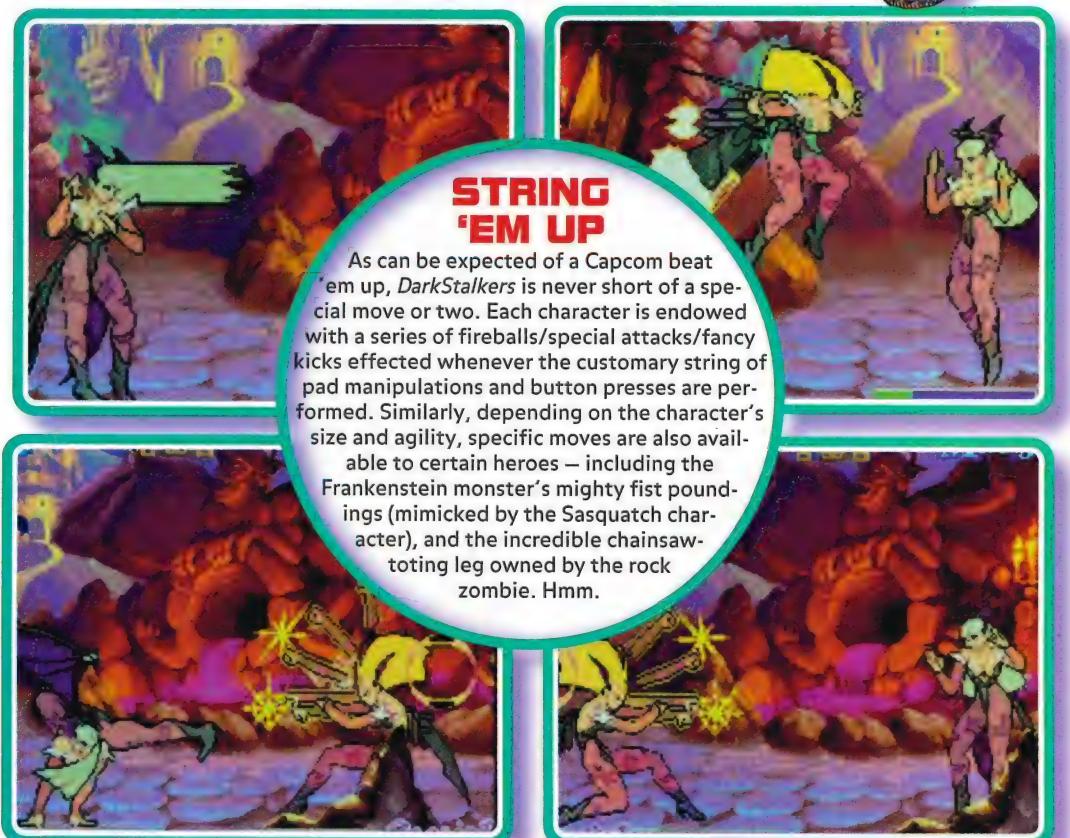
With this Fifties horror film scenario (and typically bad translation), Capcom's quest for PlayStation supremacy continues apace, as they temporarily abandon their motley band of *Street Fighters* and *X-Men* in favour of combatants more likely to be found in old Hammer films or Italian gore-fests. Retaining the same graphical style of past Capcom hits, *DarkStalkers* is another one-on-one beat 'em up as the player guides one of ten nightmarish fighters through 'best of three' bouts in a bid to become the ultimate 'creature of the night.' However, in keeping with the horror theme, Capcom have expanded upon the basic punch and kick devices favoured in past titles, and added clawing, biting and shredding moves that you'd expect a B-movie star to have at their disposal. Proving they're not afraid of the dark of the creatures found within, Virgin have pledged allegiance to Capcom's night warriors, and *DarkStalkers* is set to haunt PAL PlayStations early in the new year.



©CAPCOM CO LTD 1994/5

STRING 'EM UP

As can be expected of a Capcom beat 'em up, *DarkStalkers* is never short of a special move or two. Each character is endowed with a series of fireballs/special attacks/fancy kicks effected whenever the customary string of pad manipulations and button presses are performed. Similarly, depending on the character's size and agility, specific moves are also available to certain heroes — including the Frankenstein monster's mighty fist poundings (mimicked by the Sasquatch character), and the incredible chainsaw-toting leg owned by the rock zombie. Hmm.



THE TROUBLE MAN COMETH

In keeping with the game's spooky theme, *DarkStalkers* opens with a suitably *Scooby Doo*-style intro. With the all-too-familiar flock of birds flying towards the screen, a less than haunting song called *I'm the Trouble Man* reveals each of the characters and displays a clip of the said fighter in action, before cutting away to general shots of the game and an overview of the fighters. *Street Fighter* was never like this...



JON TALBAIN UNDERGOES THE CHANGE INTO BEAST AS HE ENTERS HIS BOUT.



THE CODE PREVIEWED ONLY ALLOWS THE PLAYER TO PLAY AGAINST THEIR CHOSEN CHARACTER.



INSIDE DEMITRI'S LUXURIOUS ROMANIAN PALACE.



LOOK WHO'S STALKING

If the *Street Fighter* combatants were the 'World Warriors', the undead hordes in *DarkStalkers* are most definitely their undead compatriots. As with the aforementioned *Street Fighter* characters, *DarkStalkers* brings its ten characters together from different parts of the world. Morrigan the succubus, for example, hails from Scotland while, unsurprisingly the Bigfoot is a dweller of Canada's chillier parts.

SAMURAI: Accursed Warrior, Bishamon.

Hailing from feudal Japan, Bishamon is equipped with the huge sword so very popular at the time.



MERMAN: Hero of the Sea, Rikuo.

Ariel the Little Mermaid he ain't. Huge 'wings' act as both shield and weapon for this Brazilian battler.



WEREWOLF: Whirlwind Wolfman, Jon Talbain.

The English entrant, born in 1940 and the master of scorching kicks and dives.



CAT WOMAN: Teen Feline Dreamer, Felicia.

Felicia is a child of the Sixties (1967, to be precise), and her claws make her a formidable representative for the US.



BIGFOOT: Snow Hulk, Sasquatch.

A huge white beast with massive and powerful fists and feet, Sasquatch is fast but slow.



MUMMY: Pharaoh from the Crypt, Anakaris.

The oldest entrant (2664BC), Anakaris is one of the larger warriors with mystic skills in addition to his might.



VAMPIRE: Prince of Darkness, Demitri Maximoff.

Demitri comes prepared with all the moves expected of a vampiric undead. Fireballs are a particular forte of Romania's fanged fighter.



ZOMBIE: Rocker of Death, Lord Raptor.

Dug up from down under, Lord Raptor is an zombie rocker (aren't they all?), with the novel addition of a chainsaw attached to his leg.



SUCCUBUS: Queen of the Night, Morrigan Aensland.

DarkStalker's token buxom wench, but one of the best all-rounders in the game. Scotland's entry to the competition.



FRANKENSTEIN: Crusher Corpse, Victor Von Gerdenheim.

Huge hands and a surplus of electrical power are two of this German hero's specialities.



COMPANY	MICROPROSE
RELEASE	FEBRUARY
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1
GENRE	SIMULATION



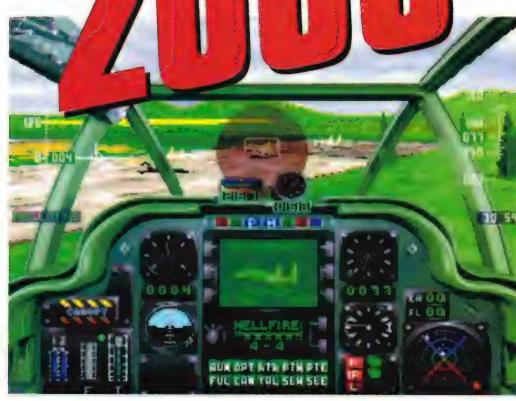
If asked to pick five memorable scenes from films which would you choose? The chest-burster exploding from Kane's rib-cage in *Alien*? The shower scene in *Psycho* maybe. Whatever your selection, the helicopter raid on the Vietnamese village in *Apocalypse Now* is one of the most breathtaking cinematic masterpieces in celluloid history. Dozens of helicopters swarm over the mass of wooden shacks and huts, showering the VC in a hail of missiles and gunfire while Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries* echoes through the jungle. Intense stuff.

While MicroProse's *Gunship 2000* isn't as cinematically exceptional as Coppola's classic, it promises to be just as action-packed. Loosely based on the best-selling PC game of the same name, *Gunship 2000* is a 3D simulation/shoot 'em up that offers frantic blasting in the arcade mode or a more in-depth challenge in the campaign simulator. Flying either the Apache or Comanche gunship the game stretches across two war theatres, namely Central Europe and the Persian Gulf. The combined forces of Iran and Iraq lurk within the desert wastelands of the Gulf while the Soviet Union leads the assault through the towering cityscapes of Europe, ploughing across the visually realistic, geographically dynamic texture-mapped terrain.

But while you may look cool flying across light-sourced landscapes in a smart combat helicopter, all street cred is instantly lost when you realise you can't fly the damn thing, yanking on the cyclic before crash landing in the middle of Paris, wiping out hundreds of innocent bystanders and toppling over the Eiffel tower. Hmm, maybe it's not such a simple shoot 'em up after all...

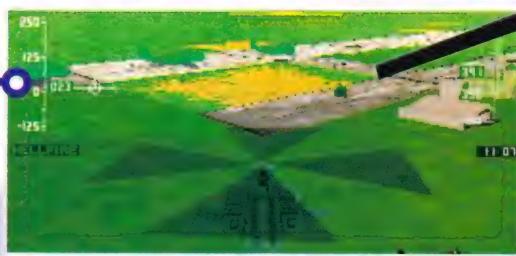
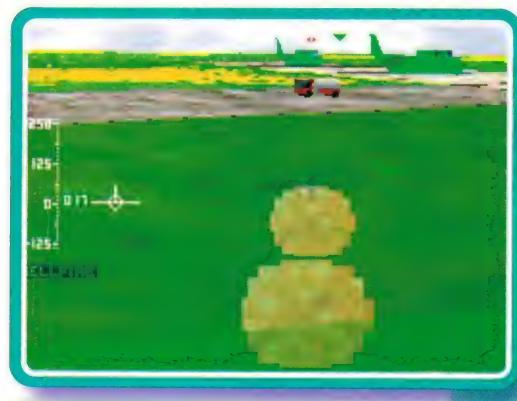


Gunship 2000



I HAVE YOU NOW! SWITCHING OVER TO HELLFIRES, YOU ACQUIRE A POSITIVE TARGET LOCK.

WHILE THE EXTERNAL VIEWS ARE NICE TO LOOK AT, THE GAME IS EASIER TO PLAY FROM INSIDE THE COCKPIT.



ANGLE OF ATTACK

Gunship 2000 is pretty good looking, really - a software supermodel if you will. Its curves are gracious, it has perfect bone structure and... erm... Anyway, there are a handful of views to flick through, from the bog-standard in-cockpit angle to the cosmetically chic chase plane. There's also a missile view, so you can watch the bloody death of your enemy first-hand!



NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC

The PlayStation incarnation of *Gunship 2000* is a far cry from the archaic PC game of yester-year. One of the main improvements it boasts is glorious texture-mapped landscapes rather than flat, bland terrain with the occasional green triangular hill. Yup, now detailed canyons carve through lush green meadows, buildings tower from the ground and even tiny aircraft taxi along runways before taking off. Ah, the wonders of modern technology.



DEATH FROM ABOVE



Before you take off always remember the airway code: mirror, signal, manoeuvre. Now where are those damn indicators?



Consulting the in-flight map, the primary target is clearly marked – an enemy airbase just a few kilometres away.



Skimming low across the ground the airfield gradually fades into view. Initiating the raid at dawn has paid off, as there is no sign of the enemy – still in bed no doubt.



Let the lazy gits have it! While they're dreaming of Karl Marx and Kolashnikov rifles, let rip with streams of missiles. BLAM! Smoke billows from the ruins of the razed airbase.



COMPANY	SONY
RELEASE	JANUARY
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1
GENRE	ADVENTURE



With the CD medium barely entering its second year across the PC and Mac formats,

Myst is already regarded as something of a veteran. Created by hippy developers, Cyan, *Myst* is a strange beast with bugger all in the way of fancy routines, instead drawing the user into its depths via its bizarre scenario and brain-stretching puzzles.

Myst is best described as a story-book on a CD. It concerns a book which has inexplicably drawn the player into its pages. Having awoken beside an unfamiliar dock, *Myst*'s plot unfolds as the player explores its flick-screen world, pressing buttons and collecting objects via its simplistic icon system.

As the PlayStation mouse or joypad is used to pan around the rendered locations, clues are casually dropped into play, with but one human ally offering the briefest of descriptions of how to escape key dilemmas, and the use of objects scattered around the play area. Your mission is simple: escape back to the real world. However, exploring the airships, boats and the island's central library unveil new objectives, drawing the player into a world where all is not what it seems. The library is the key to *Myst*, and two books – one red, the other blue – open to reveal a mini-screen, through which a human face tries to explain things through a backdrop of static interference. All is not what it seems in the world of *Myst*, and SIE plan to unveil the classic puzzler to PlayStation owners early next year. As such, consider yourself warned.

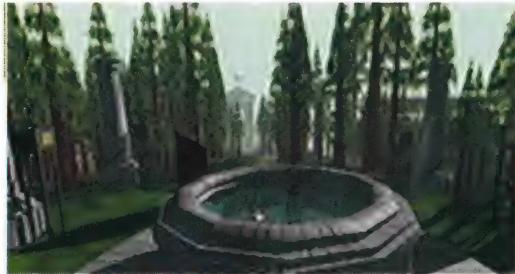


Myst



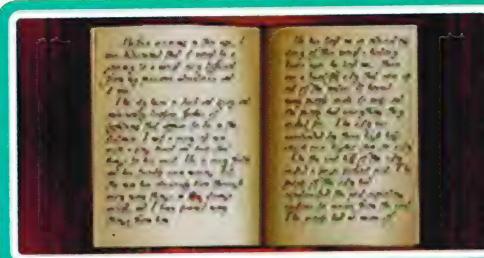
ICON-OCLAST

While *Myst*'s puzzles and conundrums will threaten the very follicles of even the most patient of adventurers, Cyan have attempted to make the game as easy to play as possible. Everything is effected using a series of icons which only appear when a particular movement is applicable – ie a door can be opened or a switch flicked. Wandering around the flick-screen locations is simply a matter of moving the cursor to the side of the play area you wish to explore and pressing the mouse or X button. Similarly, objects of interest are highlighted with a hand icon which allows the player to collect or use the object with another press of the said buttons. Simple it may seem, but the complex nature of the puzzles and the strange unfolding scenario couldn't be more to the other extreme.



STORY-TELLING

Explaining the strange goings-on within *Myst* is tricky to say the least, at least without completely destroying the plot and revealing the puzzles within this odd adventure. The books found within the game's central library tell of a man called Atrus who, alongside his wife Catherine and his two sons, Sirrus and Achenar, chose the idyllic island to escape from the pressures of the world. However, with the exception of a handful of ledgers, most of the library's contents are charred and illegible, apart from a red book and a blue book. Within these, two characters attempt to contact the player and ask them to recover pages for their respective tomes which they claim will allow them to explain the reasons for the strange goings-on on the island. Next, further readings reveals plans of islands beyond the one you find yourself on, and exploring the forests, volcanic areas and ornate buildings uncovers a plot which indicates one of the books' prisoners could be severely unbalanced.

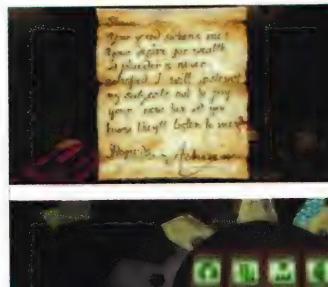


OBJECTIVITY

Solving the assorted puzzles is a matter of finding and collecting objects dotted around the play area. These objects range from pages of the all-important books to tools. However, in order to solve some of the larger riddles, several of these objects should be used in conjunction with each other.



ONE OF THE GAME'S MAP-BASED CLUES.



SELECT THE OBJECT ICON TO USE IT.



COMPLEX SEQUENCES MEAN IDLE. SWITCH USAGE IS A WASTE OF TIME.



WORLD CUP GOLF

RELEASE	FEBRUARY
PRICE	£44.99
BY	US GOLD
PLAYERS	1-4
GENRE	SPORTS SIM



Golf. Not the most exciting sport to watch on the telly admittedly, but if you've ever ended up on a nine-hole course with some mates and a set of borrowed clubs, you'll soon see its appeal. Yeah, it's still as dull as ditchwater to watch as Ronnie Corbett goes on about his handicap (which is patently obvious without the excuse of golf) while Nick Faldo interrupts divorce proceedings to smash a little white ball 300 miles into the air and next to a tiny hole. But if you've ever tried to emulate Mr Faldo you'll find yourself lucky to hit the ball ten yards let alone next to a poxy flag.

As such, for most of us the nearest we'll come to wandering across St Andrews or Pebble Beach is via one of the many simulations teeing up for a PlayStation release. With *Actua Golf*'s release slightly delayed, US Gold are planning to steal an advantage with a late January/early February release for their conversion of *World Cup Golf* from the PC. Recreating courses from the famous Hyatt course in the US, *World Cup Golf* offers a full complement of clubs and shot styles, all wrapped in a very simple control system. Every aspect of the real thing has survived the conversion to the Sony machine, with slices, hooks and utter balls-ups extremely common to the novice *WCG* player.

AROUND WITH MALICE

(1) *World Cup Golf* is geared for simplicity but total control, with the shot options kept to a minimum. Join us as we tour the first hole on the Hyatt course... The shot is preceded by a preparatory map, detailing the starting point and the hole.

(2, 3 & 4) Teeing off begins by choosing your stance, club and shot angle. For the sake of an easy life, we've opted for practice mode which uses small markers on the shot indicator (the large 'C'), indicating where to press the X button to first stop the swing, and then reduce the chances of slicing the ball. With the shot strength and accuracy determined, all that remains is to watch the 'Ball Cam' follow the shot as it whizzes (hopefully) towards the flag. Ah, the wonders of 32-bit technology.



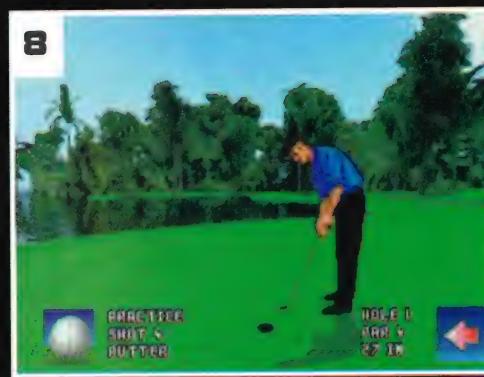


(5) It's good, and a second shot should take us onto the green. The crosshair icon is used to place the shot, and a handy ball icon details the likely outcome of a shot. Here, for example, the ball is sitting in sand, indicating the current angle will land in one of the many sand traps. Bugger that, we'll let the CPU take over.

(6) It's fallen a bit short, so a pitching wedge is needed to get it on to the green. I can see my par falling away before my very eyes...

(7) On the green at last, and a long putt is needed. Putting is again effected using a circular shot metre, but the power is measured in inches relating to the shot. As such, for a 18 inch putt, a metre measuring up to 32 inches will be displayed, with the player judging the distance using basic maths. That's us stuffed then.

(8) Balls. Told you we'd miss. We're over par, and all that remains is a tap in even we can't miss. Come back Sevvy, all is forgiven. Well, nearly all.



DRIVING TEST
In addition to offering the player a complete run of the Hyatt course, *WCG* offers other gameplay options to extend the game's longevity. In addition to the usual practice rounds and tournaments where a load of mates can join in, the programmers at Arc Developments have added a 'Skins' level wherein every hole is worth a cash bonus, and players battle it out to sink the ball first and reel the cash in. Similarly, if your par is well under, *WCG* also allows the player to practice their putting from virtually any angle and on any hole, while a driving range invites players to smack the little white ball as far as possible, mastering wind conditions and slice effects in the process.



FLYBY SHOOTING

In an attempt to maximise the PlayStation's potential (never easy in a game genre which even the ZX Spectrum can handle easily), US Gold have added a 'flyby' mode where the next hole to be played is displayed in a glorious 3D panoramic view as a camera skims across from starting point to the hole. Nice. Pointless, but nice.



Off-World Interceptor Extreme

COMPANY	BMG
RELEASE	JANUARY
PRICE	TBA
PLAYERS	1-2
GENRE	SHOOT 'EM UP



It's funny that we should be doing a retro feature this month, because as soon as I started playing *Off-World Interceptor Extreme* (I think we'll refer to that mouthful as *OWIE* from now on — even though it sounds as though it ought to be a big green duck with Keith Harris' hand up its arse) I was instantly reminded of a couple of age-old classics. The first comparison was to an old Ultimate: Play The Game treat called *Trans Am*, and the second was to the Ocean classic, *Moon Alert*. In case you're not familiar with these two, the *Trans Am* connection is that in *OWIE* you're a speedy little motor, able to roam freely around a 3D environment while other buggies attempt to cash in your chips, while the *Moon Alert* comparison is born of the crater-jumping rock-avoiding elements found within.

This souped-up 3DO release places you at the wheel of a rough, tough, four-wheel drive buggy, racing over six alien worlds, all chock-full of nasty obstacles, gun towers, and lunch-losers chasm jumps. And as if that wasn't enough, there's a plot to consider too!

Why not become a bounty hunter and take on other drivers as you attempt to catch fugitives, terrorists, and other nefarious characters for financial gain. And what are you gonna do with the money you make? Buy even more equipment for your buggy of course! Lasers, missiles, and plasma mines can all be attached to your buggy, along with turbo boosts and shields. Your car can also leap into the air on command, and with a split-screen two player option, looks well worth waiting for.



As previously mentioned, cash comes your way as you progress through the game, so get yourself down the shops and buy some new toys.

This screen is used for purchasing nitro boosts — for those extra bursts of speed; extra clones (ie lives); and missiles for your buggy. You can also access the second shop screen...



GONE SHOPPING

And here we are. From here you can buy bigger and better vehicles, as well as buy extra jumpjets and shields. There are also enhanced gyros, engines, and tyres up for grabs. All for a price obviously.



DIFFERENT WORLD



The options within *OWIE* allow you to play the game as either a story (ie a progressive scenario where you only approach the game in a set sequence) or as an arcade game, where you select the order you attack the levels in.



A plain-yet-attractive landscape, filled with power-ups, but covered in nasty sharp crystal formations and frightening machinery.



RORY, RORY, TELL US ANOTHER STORY

Should you decide to play the game in 'Story' mode, you'll be treated to tons of lovely FMV. BMG are man enough to realise that this is generally a right old crummy thing to

do, and have presented all of these clips as being watched by two Beavis and Butthead-types, sitting in couches, making snide comments as the plot unfolds.



Thanks to this training screen I don't have to tell you all of the various controls, but as you can see, there's a fair old few buttons to press and things to do.



You can view the proceedings from either the cockpit or with a behind-and-above battle cam. The first-person is exciting, but gets a bit complicated, especially when you've got as many lasers as I have.



Just like the golden arches, these green posts say "you're welcome". The reason? Well, they're the waypoint signals, and once you get here, it means you've finished this stage of the level. Hurrah!



Bastion



Lots of grass, lots of sand, yes, this is a lovely country ride. If only all those enemy buggies didn't want to kill me!

Atlantia



A very attractive level, this one, filled with lush valleys and tropical vegetation. However, it also features tons of guns that rise out of the ground in front of you. Bugger.

Las Lunas



Not a nice place to go for your holidays. This is a flat and barren world, made worse by a large number of steel barriers that sprout from underground and halt your progress every couple of seconds.

Scorch 7



Nothing but desert to report here, but check out this end of level boss! Well actually, don't get too excited – it's not that amazing – but I though you might like to see one of the buggers anyway.

COMPANY	VIC TOKAI
RELEASE	FEBRUARY
PRICE	£44.99
PLAYERS	1-2
GENRE	BEAT 'EM UP

Criticom



At present it seems it's *Tekken* and *To Shin Den* that are vying for PlayStation supremacy in much the same fashion as *Street Fighter* and *Mortal Kombat* have done on 16-bit consoles. *Criticom* arrives with the express intention of breaking up this cosy rivalry and competing on an equal footing with each of them.

Featuring eight combatants who vary from the relatively down to earth to the utterly fantastic, *Criticom* is, for the most part, a standard one-on-one beat 'em up. All fights take place in rings suspended in space or at the summit of a tower. This means that if a fighter stumbles, or is forced over the edge, they're history. Like *To Shin Den* though, players have the ability to side-step which often means a lunging opponent ends up plunging to their own death!

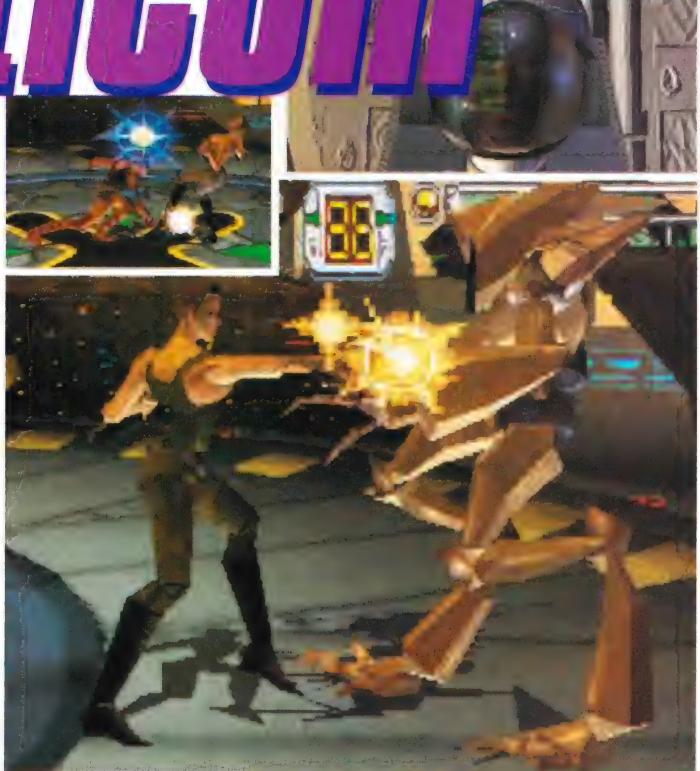
Vic Tokai wanted to get away from the martial arts theme a little bit and that is why they have created such a diverse bunch of characters mixing lots of styles of combat and throwing in fireballs and the like that are more familiar to a game in the *Street Fighter* tradition. Will this prove to be an intoxicating cocktail? Only the great reviews barman can tell.

HATEFUL EIGHT

The eight characters have between them a vast range of moves and fighting styles. Here's a look at this unusual octet together with an example of them in action...

DELARA ZERAL:

Looking much like your 18th century pirate, Delara goes so far as to wield a large cutlass. Believing in the honour of physical combat without the aid of advanced technology, Delara has learnt various techniques with her sword like a roll and slash combo, and a talent for impaling opponents and picking them up. A shield acts as her defence.



SONORK NEZAM:

Not the most handsome looking chap in the universe, Sonork is an alien from an ancient civilisation who have embraced cybernetic technology. He starts off with fairly simple moves like roundhouse kicks and the like, but as he moves through the ranks he becomes more cybernetic and wields blade shots to attack from a distance.



DEMONICA:

Wearing some rather seductive metal lingerie don't be fooled by Demonica who starts to mutate as she moves through the ranks. Because she exists in another dimension she has magic qualities that enable her to release fireballs of all speeds and oscillations.



DAYTON TRENT:

Apparently Dayton's motto is "If it exists, I'll find it". An idle boast this and one typical of the mercenary mentality of this soldier. Carrying a laser gun in one hand and a knife in the other, his style of fighting rough and tumble. He shares the highest number of special moves with Yenji and is one of the most well balanced competitors in terms of strength and agility.



GORM :

Looking like a snotty version of the honey monster, Gorm's talents revolve around his size and his spear. He has a number of spins and jabs he has perfected with it and he is also able to lunge with it and sweep away opponents legs. His size is useful when an enemy is already down giving him the opportunity to do a rolling pounce on to them.

**YENJI :**

Carrying a mean set of razor claws, Yenji is tall and agile. She is perhaps as good a warrior as Delara using a wide variety of rolls and turns to out-manoeuvre her opponent. As she moves through the ranks, Yenji develops psychic powers that vary depending on which type of mask she happens to be wearing. Spooky eh?

**SGT. EXENE DULALT :**

Looking at the way she dresses it comes as no surprise to find out that Exene grew up in a military family. She holds a baton in each hand which she uses to both attack opponents and block. She also has the ability to fire tazer and electro projectiles to supplement her physical strength.

S.I.D. :

S.I.D. stands for Sentient Integrated Droid and it developed out of a dying race whose brains were transplanted into machines. S.I.D. has the least number of special moves and its size makes its movements clumsy and slow. However, it does have some pretty snazzy missiles which it launches from its shoulders.

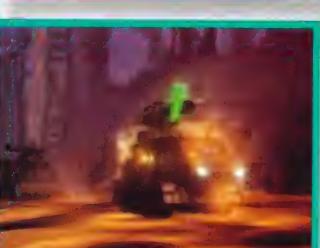


TELL US A STORY

The Tekken intro sequence really got the jaws dropping when people first laid eyes on it. Likewise Criticom comes with some fantastic rendered intro sequences. More than this though, whenever you choose a competitor in the tournament mode, their own personal story is outlined with the help of some amazing rendering. As you move up through the ranks this story develops until it reaches its climax in ultimate victory or defeat.



HERE'S WHERE YOU PICK YOUR PLAYER. WITH EIGHT WEIRD AND WONDERFUL ENTITIES TO CHOOSE FROM, YOU'LL PROBABLY SPEND HOURS ON THIS SCREEN.



BREAKING RANK

Criticom makes a bit of a departure from the usual beat 'em ups by saving some of the special moves until your character has succeeded in defeating every other character in the game. After this you move from Rank 1 to Rank 2. Not only does this mean your opponents are stronger and more skilful but it also gives you access to some new moves. Defeat all of the characters this second time around and you graduate to Rank 3 and even more special moves become available. This means that, in total, each character has between 13 and 22 special moves and combos at their disposal!



THIS PIECE OF ACTION FEATURES DELARA AND EXENE IN COMBAT. EXENE IS A PRETTY TOUGH COOKIE AND SHE DEMONSTRATES AS MUCH HERE WITH THE NOVEL USE OF HER BATONS TO CREATE A FIREBALL.

SURRENDERING THE USE OF HER RAZOR CLAWS, YENJI GOES FOR A LOW ATTACK ON THAT TEMPTRESS OF EVIL DEMONICA.

EVERY BEAT 'EM UP HAS TO HAVE ITS MR. COOL, AND IN CRICOM IT'S THE CHEESY DAYTON. BY THE WAY, HIS TAUNTING VOICE SOUNDS ALMOST IDENTICAL TO CLINT EASTWOOD'S. GO AHEAD PUNK, MAKE ME PLAY!



ISSUE 2 IS ALMOST HERE

MAXIMUM



ZONE HUNTING CITY HUNTER





If we're honest, we know nothing about the French games scene. Once they had a reputation for producing nothing more than weird, wacky puzzle games, but for the last few years have been quietly infiltrating the UK market via well known publishers such as EA, Infogrames and now, Sony. On further inspection it must be said that they've actually been responsible for some of the finest games of the last few years. *Alone in the Dark*, *Little Big Adventure*, *Another World*, *Flashback*, and... er, *Rayman* all spring to mind. Hmm.

Matt Broughton delves even deeper to see what PlayStation software is currently cycling through the Tunnel wearing nothing but a black and white striped jumper, a black beret, and a string of onions. ©1995 Outdated xenophobic stereotypes, Ltd.



Bonjour. Je m'appelle Matt. Je voudrais un kilo des pommes s'il vous plait. Oh yes, I nearly forgot — Il y a beaucoup de poissons dans la mer. That, ladies and gentlemen, is about as French as I get (and I had to ask my girlfriend about the 'fish in the sea' bit!) Apart from the odd trip up the Eiffel Tower, and occasional hot croissants with cheese and ham, I know nothing about those people who like to think of themselves as good lovers, but are generally regarded by the English as smelly people. I'm glad to report that this is wrong. They don't smell, though as for whether they're good lovers, well, you'll have to ask someone else. I'll admit that female French accents do make me go quite wobbly, but I've never got much further than that. Damn.

Of course, being involved in the software industry, it's hard not to have noticed their presence over the last few years, with some breath-taking releases, and, more notably, some groundbreaking technology. Even on the Amiga, products such as *Another World* made people sit up and take the French developers seriously, as they proved that technology such as motion-capture could be used to create an incredible game and not just an incredible-looking game.



CITY OF THE LOST CHILDREN. ANOTHER SEXY FRENCH PRODUCT ON ITS

LE SCENE FRANCIA

The French games market has shared much the same history as the UK over the last few years. They travelled through the same generations of machines as we did, with the Amiga market and the Amstrad market being very powerful for a while, then the Nintendo, the PC, and now (of course) the PlayStation. I turn to the General Manager of Sony France, Denis Friedman, for more information on the French public's opinion on these 'grown men' playing games for a living

"For a while the market was perceived as nothing more than a successful childrens' market. However, now that the PC is getting a larger share of the market,



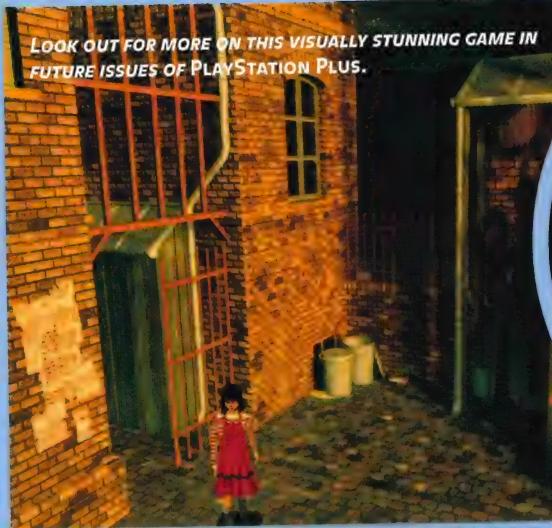
AS IS TRADITIONAL, A NUMBER OF CAMERA ANGLES ARE ON OFFER IN ADIDAS POWER SOCCER. C'WOR!



ADIDAS POWER SOCCER HAS TO BE SEEN TO BE BELIEVED. THE ANIMATION OF THE PLAYERS IS LIKE NOTHING WE'VE SEEN SO FAR. CAN YOU WAIT?

that perception is changing. You can see that, as the multi-media market is establishing itself as one of the most interesting new markets, they're beginning to understand that games are a large part of that market. People are taking them a lot more seriously than they were, and that's reflected in the way French television has reacted. We used to have a lot of kids' programmes showing games, but now you find that it's on news and more adult programmes."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 52



ADIDAS POWER SOCCER

We've spent a couple of months referring to it as Power Sports Soccer but I can finally reveal the true title to Sony's forthcoming Foothy game, and it is (in case you hadn't noticed the enormous heading) Adidas Power Soccer. Of course, by the time it actually makes it onto your PlayStation there will be a fair old bucket of soccer games to choose from. So, I ask our man Denis, how do you go about making 'yet another football game'?

"The answer is very simple: you have to design well. When we decided to make a soccer game, we selected people that were used to designing the intelligence and game engines for sports simulations. In the game, each one of the players is a different item in terms of the computer's tasks, so they each have their own intelligence within the game. This allows us to have very very complex strategy routines.

"On the other hand, we wanted to use a very straight forward new technology that people are now using a lot, which is motion capture and then 3D real-time. You have several ways of doing that, and though everyone does motion capture, it's really the way you use the information that makes the game great or not. It can still be pretty boring to play a game even if it boasts motion capture – it's not magic, you know. The basic idea behind our use was that, to make the animation realistic, it has to be long enough. If it's too short, it becomes jerky, so the problem was that we needed enough animation on the screen to keep things realistic. The way we got around this was to have the animation stored for before the action and after the action. The player is 'clever' enough to know when the ball is coming to him, and starts his animation, which is then followed by the player controlled animations. When you see it, you'll appreciate the effect it has. You see 'real life' on the field."



staff were used, in terms of the design, everything was very much 'from scratch'. So what's left to do?

"Really just another month implementing tricks that people will like to see. The basic engine is there, the game play is there, and you can play the game now. What we're really tuning is the camera movements, because now that we've got the whole thing, we're really focusing on making sure the camera movement is intelligent – it has its own AI routines. We want to be sure that the camera is in exactly the right spot to show off the action to the maximum effect. We're also concentrating on the arcade mode."

Denis has seen all of the other footy games on offer for the PlayStation, and apart from one (not that he'd tell me which), feels that they're no competition. "The major problem is that any games using 'old technology' won't stand up as far as comparison goes. When you've already done a soccer game, it's easy to go back and simply build on that. It's as though other companies didn't think people could handle new technology, so they've gone halfway between the old and new. You have to start from scratch. We looked at the PlayStation, wanted to do a soccer game, and just thought 'right, what do we want this game to do'. I think some people have limited themselves by going along with the way they've always done things. It's a dangerous trap, and I can understand why they did it that way, but I don't think it will stand up to what I consider to be a 100 percent PlayStation game."



In all, a year was spent on the artificial intelligence, and though experienced





Another indication of the impact games are having in France is that stores previously oblivious to the market (such as book stores) are now stocking a number of relevant products.

"The games market here isn't quite as developed as it is in the UK," continues Denis, "but it's growing steadily. I think the French people are generally more careful about what they spend their money on, but in terms of what's on offer here, I think we're more or less the same. The type of games that are successful here are a little bit different, but each country's markets has a preferred product, so a soccer game will do much better in the UK than in France."

If France has a preferred product, it has to be the adventure action game. Denis believes that the French players prefer a more 'thinking' game to general action games. In that way, the French market is more like the US than the UK.

"Obviously, a very successful game will be successful all over the world, but in terms of what's Number One, you would see differences in the different countries. As far as what games are on offer and what companies are competing, it's the same brand names as everywhere."



Games machines have been pretty successful throughout French history, with millions of SNES and Megadrives having been sold into the market in the past. The PlayStation's sales have been as successful in France as in Germany and the UK, so the market is doing "unbelievably well". And what of the French image of a games player. What is French for "anorak"?

"We had that 'sad-boy' image

for certain people, but the image is changing. People are now understanding the market and realising that games are there for kids and for adults. I think that, because most of the people buying CD-ROM are between 25 and 35, the public longer contests the fact that the games market stretches a lot further than just the kids. The level of perception is not yet as good as in the movie or record business, but it's getting better, and I think the fact that people like Microsoft are

really getting into the market is changing peoples' view about the whole market. The people from the economic newspapers understand the market very well (by seeing the strong figures against other markets) and respect it, but people from the general press are still harder to approach."

Apart from the fact that Denis is from Sony France (and there-

fore unlikely to say anything against the PlayStation!) he sees it as one of the leading formats, if not the leading format for this season. "The PlayStation is a major part of our revenue this year, so it features very heavily in our plans for the future. We'll have some pretty heavy duty stuff." Excellent!

CONTINUED ON PAGE 54

As we've mentioned *Another World* and *Flashback*, it seems only fair that we acknowledge more than just the French office of Sony in this feature (although, with Denis' incredible command of English, it is tres tempting!)

Delphine are a company who appear to be able to do no wrong. *Another World* was a real eye-opener when it appeared, and the subsequent release, *Flashback*, was similarly stunning. Well, though new gamers won't be able to enjoy the likes of said games on their PlayStation, *Fade to Black* is on its way, and boy, does it look good!

Previewed in our now collector's item Issue One, *Fade to Black* is a visually stunning action adventure, with lots of sexy fighting, tons of groovy exploring, and graphics that I'd do my best to describe if only I hadn't already used up all my favourite words.

The Paris-based wizards are still beavering away on the PlayStation version, but if the PC release is anything to go by, we're in for a treat. The man in the know is one Victor Perez, the Marketing Manager for Delphine. So, how's it all coming along?

"Well it's still under development, but should be ready by the end of January. To be honest, you can add maybe six weeks on top of that, but certainly by the end of March you'll see it."

Though this is Delphine's first PlayStation projects, they've have found the PlayStation to be a good machine to program, with the only real problem being the two Megs of memory. Victor explains:

"*Fade to Black* was originally programmed to work on an eight Meg machine, so we had to cut a lot back. Eventually it will be a better product than the version that appeared on PC, with more colours and a better quality of animation. Apart from the memory restrictions, the PlayStation is quite similar to the PC as far as working on goes – if anything, it's easier. With PCs you have to worry about all the many configurations on the market. You have to take every possible variant into consideration to optimise the program so it'll work for everyone's machine. With the PlayStation it's very easy. You don't have to worry about people upgrading."

As well as *Fade to Black*, Delphine also have a number of products being created by their Lyon-based sister company, Adeline. The sequel to *Little Big Adventure* (a PC hit from last year) is currently in production, along with a new game called *Time Commando*. But why aren't they producing a PlayStation version of the original *Little Big Adventure* ('cause I liked it lots!)? Victor explains:

"I don't think there'll be a version on the PlayStation simply because we tried to do it, but the game was really designed for PC and it didn't convert well to the hardware. Rather than converting, We're trying to take products from scratch."

As far as how to measure the reac-



tion to the PlayStation in France, Victor can only compare it to the reaction the Amstrad 6128 received some ten or twelve years ago. "The media reaction was also incredible," continues Victor. "The same weekend that the machine was released, it was featured absolutely everywhere on the television." Victor (like Denis Friedman) believes the public is split into two sections: the old audience who are very negative about games players, and the more modern public who don't really have a bad opinion of games. "People play at the office, people play at home. It can be everyone."

Victor likes to have full freedom with each project, and, in fact, *Fade to Black* started off as a 2D 'Flashback 2'. But would they ever dabble in other genres than the established French-pleaser, the action/adventure?

"Well we have tried before and had a very bad experience. About two years ago we had a product called *Shaq Fu*. We'd been contacted by Electronic Arts with a proposal to develop a fighting game complete with a big license and everything. It was very well paid, and we did it – but regretted it a lot."

The reason for their failure was simple. All the things that Delphine excel in – graphics, animations, game engines – were the least important as far as beat 'em up players are concerned. *Shaq Fu* moved well and looked a treat, but players were looking for speed and playability, and *Shaq* just didn't have it. So let's forget about that, and talk about *Time Commando*. What's it all about?

"It's very difficult to explain, it's an action game, with a little bit of a puzzle play, and fighting. It's a kind of shoot 'em up, but not really." Well that clears that up!



PARASITE

One of the forthcoming products from those clever people in the French Sony office is *Parasite*, a curious humour/horror affair that Denis compares to the film *An American Werewolf in London*. This story takes place in a village in Arkansas where, during the past few days, people have been mysteriously disappearing with no apparent explanation... hmm.

At exactly the same time a diminutive extra-terrestrial policeman (I kid you not) is circling our planet searching for criminals when his craft breaks down and he's forced to abandon ship. The tiny alien has no other option but to use his ejector seat, and falls to Earth only to land in a glass of beer which is about to be drunk by our hero, Jack.

As Jack finishes his drink he comes over all peculiar, realises that he has drunk something that doesn't quite agree with him, and promptly grows a number of cysts on his face. Rather unsurprisingly, everyone gets 'a bit frightened' of him and tries to kill him. He has to escape...

And so it is that Jack and his parasite must travel through different locations, fighting various enemies, searching for the invaders, and looking for the antidote to the mutation of Jack's body. Luckily, the mutation has also endowed Jack with super powers. Unluckily, it's also transforming him into a monster doomed to die. Oh, and anyone who mentions *Inner Space* gets a kick in the nads.

"In the French studio we've focused on different styles of game," explains Denis, "not every genre – because it's impossible to say we're going to do the best game of every genre – but we have concentrated on the type that we could really excel in. Obviously, with the success of games like *Flashback* and *Prince of Persia*, we know the genre is a popular one, as well as one that the French programmers have proved themselves on time and time again. *Parasite* is very similar to games like this – with better graphics etc, obviously – but in terms of the style of the game, it's a direct follow on. We have, however, now utilised new technologies that are available: motion-capture, blue-screen, 3D pre-rendered background, 3D animated characters, etc."

Of course, as we all know, pretty much every game on the PlayStation has features all of the above techniques, but that doesn't mean that many of them have actually been any good. Do you go out of your way to use these techniques, or do you just 'go with the flow'? Man.

"We only use it when it's necessary. It's like using video footage – some products need it and some don't. Often it's relevant and

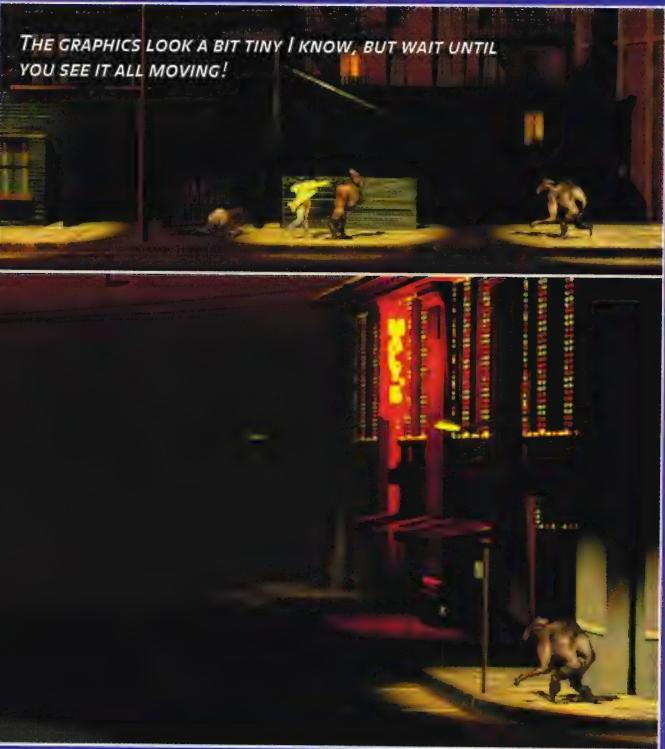
adds something to the product, and it's the same with blue screen and 3D modelling. With *Parasite*, we've really focused on the realistic side of things. We wanted to focus on the fact that you could really enter the story line because the backgrounds were really realistic. The easiest way was to use 3D background modelling."

I ask if Denis thinks that, as more companies get into using speech, renders, FMV, etc, the concentration moves away from the actual games and more into how clever they can look and sound?

"Well the idea is to make a good game. Whatever technology you use has to work towards that goal. It's true that it can be a big trap, because it's easy to get wrapped up making great rendered sequences and stunning graphics, but we all know that games like that just flop. If you don't have the content, and don't have the technology focusing on the gameplay, you're as good as dead."

"When you plan a new product, there are two considerations. One is the presentation, and the other is technology. The technology decisions come pretty early, because you have to decide what type of technology you're going to be using (FMV, blue screen, etc) before you actually start the real game programming. With *Adidas Power Soccer* we always knew from the start that we wanted to have a real-time, 3D engine with motion-captured players and everything. In terms of what then add to 'dress-up' the product, it's really dictated by the level of production cost that you have – because it's a very expensive part of the game – and also by whether it's relevant or not. What's interesting with *Parasite*, is that the story line itself is funny – because we wanted to focus on the horror/humour type thing – so the non-interactive sequences were very important because they're what's bringing in the humour. It was therefore important to have carefully designed sequences between the different levels. For other games it might not be so important, such as the soccer game where the important part is the game play itself, not useless movie sequences."

With *Parasite*, the team are trying to entice players by combining hi-resolution graphics with stunning animation, and, of course, game play that Denis describes as "terrific". In terms of the technology being used for the game's engine, there are no revolutionary techniques being employed here, but the entire team are confident that the way the game plays, and the way that the story is told will give it that edge.



AND TOMORROW?

Both Victor and Denis have been astonished by the speed with which the PlayStation and related products have been flying off the shelves, but as far as what Denis thinks the

future holds for the PlayStation, well, it all seems to be very 3D-ish... Apparently, "3D hasn't been fully exploited yet," he says.

"Certainly it's there in racing games and sport simulations, but I think you can expect a lot more from 3D than what's on the market at the moment. People will find clever, less

obvious ways of using 3D in games. I think you'll also see non-3D game types we're familiar with, but enhanced in many other ways. Then again, if I knew what would be successful in the future, I'd be off doing it now and not talking to you!" Oh. Charmed I'm sure! Au revoir.

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GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE

CONTINUES: N/A

SKILL LEVELS: 2

RELEASE	DECEMBER
PRICE	£44.99
BY	EA
PLAYERS	1-2



Fifa



Of all the football games released across every console, none have the pedigree of EA's *FIFA* series. Its arrival on the Megadrive four years ago saw its sales out-strip those of the mighty *Sonic* and the latest *Street Fighter* installment, and the cart positioned itself at the top of the 16-bit cartridge chart for months on end, and even then refused to leave the top ten. One thing seemed to have been missed in the hype, though. Megadrive *FIFA* wasn't particularly playable. While it offered realistic player sprites performing diving headers, bicycle kicks and long-distance volleys on a detailed isometric pitch, after mere minutes of play, users were heard to mutter that they barely seemed in control of their squad. Yes, headers were feasible, but it always seemed the CPU stepped in to instigate one.

With the advent of CD-based machines, EA were quick off the mark with a 3DO adaptation of their kickaround, this time using the machine's enhanced processing power to replace the eight-directional scrolling of the 16-bit game with numerous viewpoints, which panned in and out of the action as the game progressed. The aim was to add a television 'feel' and it succeeded. Sadly, the gameplay once again fell by the wayside: 3DO *FIFA* was limited in the extreme.

Now, with the advent of the Sony machine, EA have taken the opportunity to update the *FIFA* code, adding a 'Virtua Stadium' idea whereby any area of the pitch can be viewed from any angle at any time, and also taking the time to address the gameplay complaints of past *FIFA* aficionados. If this has been accomplished, the quest for the ultimate PlayStation kickaround could be well and truly over...



ON ME 'EAD, MATE



Goal kicks, throw-ins and corners use a cross-hair sight to allow the player to position their throw or kick. However, taking it beyond the likes of *Striker* whereby the player hoped someone was there to run on to such a move, *FIFA* features preprogrammed set-plays, wherein a player can be sent running into a predetermined position using the circle button. Similarly, set pieces can be pulled out of the hat when taking a corner kick, as the player can send a striker legging it into the box ready to connect with a well-placed corner. The German team is particularly adept at this for some reason – probably because Klinsmann is famed for hanging around the goal mouth.



A THROW-IN, DANGEROUSLY CLOSE TO THE GOAL. A LONG THROW COULD EASILY BE MET BY A WELL-TIMED VOLLEY OR EVEN A DIVING HEADER.

JOHN MOTSON: SUPERSTAR

Commentary in a video game is a double-edged sword. Take, for example, Andy Gray's constant drawling in *Striker* '96. By the time you've heard him moan about the quality of your tackle (if you catch my drift) twice, you're already sick of him. *FIFA* '96, however, walks the commentary line perfectly, with the irrepressible John Motson on hand with comments and match details. Motty introduces each game, and then offers full commentary as the match kicks off. However, whereas Andy Gray just turned up with the odd quote, EA have managed to cram in over 700 sampled quotes, effectively giving *FIFA* full commentary. As such, as

the ball is played, players 'land a pass at Klinsmann's feet perfectly', 'test the goalie', or 'Dicks went in with a late tackle.' No change there then. There are times when the commentary gets a little tedious – midfielders tend to get the most references, meaning the same names are repeated too often, as is the 'forced a save from the goalie'

quote – and Motty is often a little early ('good save' when it hasn't reached the goal yet!) or late ('he has a shot' when it has been blocked), but overall this is the best example you're likely to see of sound being used to enhance a game. Bloody hell, who would've thought John Motson would be part responsible for an innovation...



F96



STANDS TO REASON

With Andy Sinton and Chris Woods used as the basis for *FIFA '96*'s sprite animations, EA have stepped up the realism quota with their new 'Virtual Stadium' system. Designed to maximise the power of 32-bit systems such as the PlayStation, VS allows the player to view the pitch from any angle, and at any time, with little or no slow down to the on-field athletics. To this end, *FIFA '96*'s programmers have built the stadium from a wireframe skeleton, and rendered and added detail to the basic shell. With the PlayStation handling such screen updates with ease, the player may swap between any of the given views (see box) or pan around to their heart's content. Other forthcoming EA titles – including *NHL* – are set to use the system.

THE BEHIND GOAL VIEW IS THE BEST SHOWCASE FOR FANTASTIC SAVES.



TACTICAL WITHDRAWAL

FIFA '96 is home to more options than Cadbury's store cupboard. Any part of the game can be tinkered with, whether it be match length or switching the offside rule on or off, but as the arcade nature of the game wears off, *FIFA '96* is ready with a series of tactical options, allowing the player to build up a squad from the bare basics and create their own variety of the long-ball game or some such established idea. Join us as we don our sheepskin coats and prepare to do what Alan Ball has so far failed to manage: win some games...

TEAM STRATEGY

If you hold a good lead, it may be wise to opt for a more defensive approach towards the end of the game, or, if behind, go for an all-out attack.



STARTING LINE-UP

Personally, I'd never have Teddy Sheringham kicking off for England, and this option allows you to swap players before kick off.



TEAM FORMATION

The good old 4-3-3 formation's my fave, but you could always opt for the El Tel 'Christmas Tree' formation.



EDITING A CUSTOM TEAM

For those of you with memory cards, EA have mad a provision whereby you can create a team from the cream of the teams on offer. Hmmm... Giggs, Baggio, Sheeeeeaaarer, and Julian Dicks. Perhaps not.



TEAM WORK

EA certainly haven't scrimped on the teams on offer, and no less than fourteen leagues are available – including the relatively unknown Malaysian for some bizarre reason – each of which contains the cream of that country's teams. And Ipswich in the UK. On selecting your team, a scout team then offers a description of their performance when it comes to shooting, passing, etc, in comparison to the opposition eleven. It has to be said, though, that some of the comparisons are a little unfair as according to the scout the Kuala Lumpur XI out points West Ham on every front! Impressively, John Motson has also sat in EA's sound studio and recorded the name of every player in the game (with the notable exception of the goalkeepers) which are duly tagged on to the assorted quotes he offers. Because of the ever-changing world of soccer, though, it soon becomes apparent that things have changed in the transfer market as Man Utd fans will find Paul Ince, Andre Kanchelskis and Mark Hughes still in their squad, while Alan Sugar

will no doubt be chuffed to ribbons to find Jürgen Klinsmann still wears a Spurs shirt. At least Crystal Palace get to keep Chris Armstrong, I suppose...



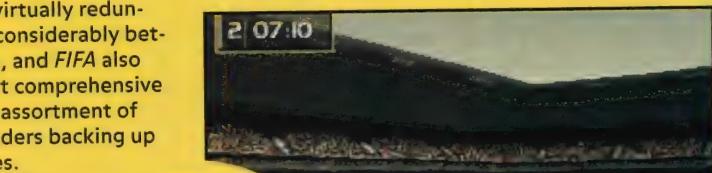
WHAT A LOOKER

If it came down to looks alone, *FIFA* would already be declared the supreme footy game. Quite frankly, it looks excellent. While the player sprites look a tad clunky when viewed from the 'Ball Cam', they move well and react realistically to fouls and moves. Similarly, the time EA spent with Andy Sinton to perfect the sprite animations was well worth the effort as never before have I seen West Ham players using skill to flick the ball from their heel on to a volley, although supporters of teams not in the top five of the Premier League will sympathise with the mad scrabbling of a stricken goalie as the opposition scramble to tonk it in the net.

TAKING THE PASS

In our Issue One soccer round-up, a common quote from the publishers of the featured titles was 'motion-captured animation' and 'sprites capable of everything a real player can do.' At last, however, in *FIFA '96* we have a game that can at last back up these claims. While the small size of the sprites renders any motion capture stuff virtually redundant, the sprites do indeed move considerably better than those of past kickarounds, and *FIFA* also excels in the fact that it is the most comprehensive of the footy games so far, with an assortment of flicks, bicycle kicks and diving headers backing up the customary lobs and long passes. Depending on whether the player is in possession of the ball, pressing the four facia buttons effects the said lobs and passes, while the more complex moves are realised by pressing combinations of buttons — for example, depressing the X and circle button

together as the ball approaches pulls off a stunning turning volley. The control system, it has to be said, is *FIFA*'s strong point. Past versions of the game — including the 3DO version which has the most similarities to this PlayStation code — have been barely playable, but the Sony incarnation finally realises the potential of marrying a good idea to hardware which can handle it admirably.



COMMENT

MATT

Folks, I'm happy. I'm happy 'cause Steve's happy. Don't think for a minute that I care about his mental health, it's just that he's finally stopped going on and on about how much he wants to play *FIFA*. It's here, it's in his pocket, it's bloody good, and at last he appears to have shut up. *FIFA* succeeds where the previous soccer offerings have failed with a very simple inclusion — gameplay. Though we've had a number of very attractive-looking footy games thrown our way over the last few months, none of them have really had any lasting appeal, simply because so many of them were just not controllable enough to enjoy. *FIFA* has good passing, a variety of ways to score and, apart from the odd diagonal 'sure thing', a pretty glitch-free code. The camera angles are actually useful rather than just clever inclusions, and the sound and commentary knock spots off the likes of the Andy Gray-narrated *Striker*. I'm not quite as dazzled as Steve, but this is the best offering so far. Easily.



ONE OF THE ENGLAND ALL-STARS XI IS SENT FLYING AS HE FAILS TO RIDE A TACKLE.

AFTER THE POSITION OF A GOAL KICK HAS BEEN SET, THE VIEW SWITCHES TO WATCH THE ACTUAL KICK.



THE BALL CAM MODE ALLOWS FOR THE MOST VISUALLY IMPRESSIVE SEQUENCES. AS PLAYERS LEG IT DOWN THE WING, THE VIEW PANS AROUND TO KEEP UP. EAT YOUR HEARTS OUT BBC...

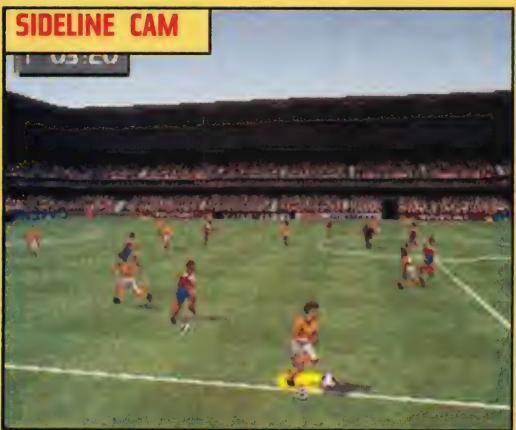


CAM AGAIN

Let's face it, you've spent £300 on your PlayStation, it can move all those polygons effortlessly – let's use it to view the action from every angle...



Television-style as seen from Des Lynam's box. If you catch my drift...



Close up, and slung fairly low...



Free-floating camera. A personal favourite.



Seen from behind one of the goals, but often confusing to use in play.

STADIUM CAM



Akin to the Tele Cam, but from a steeper, closer angle.

SHOULDER CAM



It's like the Challenge Anneka cameraman is on the pitch...

BALL CAM



The closest view, but jumps between angles at the most inopportune moments.

CUP OF CHEER

Blah, blah, blah, cup tournaments on offer. Blah, blah, blah, leagues, too. Yes, it's that perennial old box where we inform you that *FIFA '96* has options for friendly games, cup tournaments and leagues. Thus, if the glitter of silverware is needed in your binary trophy cabinet you are cordially invited to guide your chosen XI to victory – saving your progress on to a memory card if it all gets a bit long-winded.



COMMENT

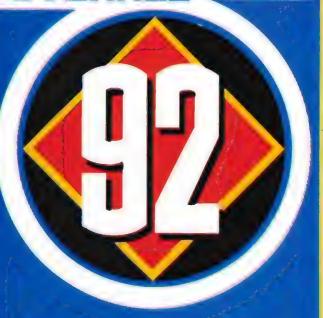
STEVE

I must admit I had doubts about *FIFA* having been singularly unimpressed by the 3DO and Super NES versions – mainly because they were limited in playability. With this Sony version, though, EA have taken the views and realistic sprites of the 3DO game and added the gameplay the series has long missed. Yes, in addition to the fancy (and sometimes useless) camera views, there is now genuine passing, slick moves, and cracking 30 yard shots to back it up. People talk of motion capture, but while *FIFA*'s sprites move well, they are not the most integral part of the game. That boils down to the easy to use but plentiful moves on offer, and the speed at which the game trots along. That's not to say *FIFA '96* is without its faults: the sound takes a while to catch up at times, and tackling is often imprecise. It also falls into the 'diagonal shot' trap at times, but getting into such a shooting position is made harder thanks to intelligent defending by the CPU. I could well have done without the rap tune at the start, but this'll do for me more than nicely...

RATING

GRAPHICS	92
ANIMATION	85
SOUND FX	92
MUSIC	93
LASTABILITY	91
PLAYABILITY	92

OVERALL





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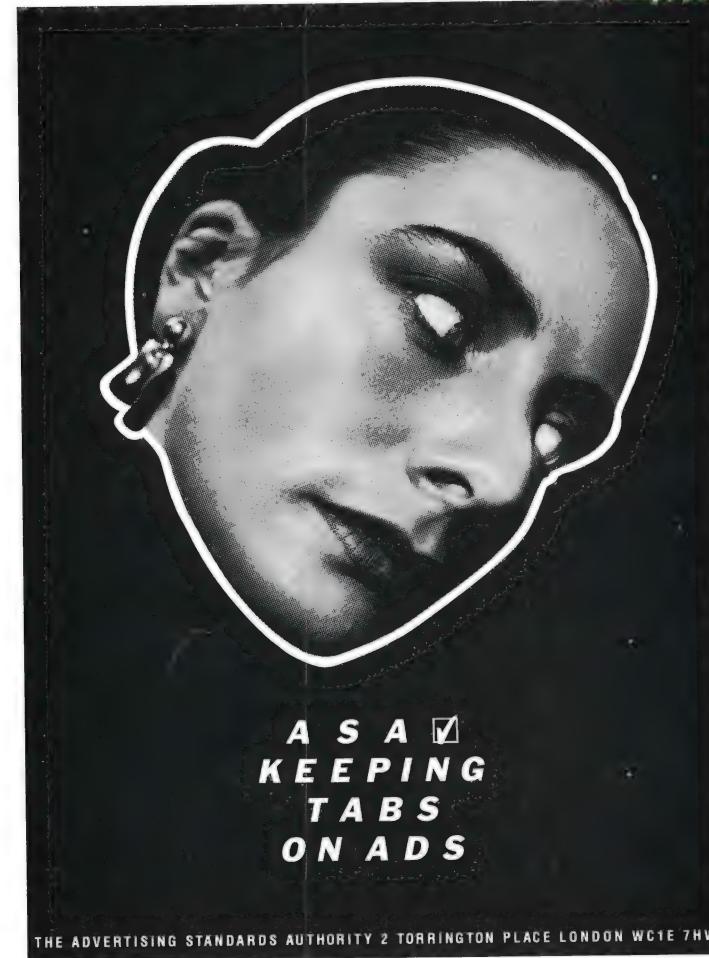
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GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD
CONTINUES: PASSWORD
SKILL LEVELS: 2

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YOUR MISSION, SHOULD YOU ACCEPT IT...

The missions in Agile Warrior are similar in structure to those in Desert Strike as each campaign is constructed of a series of smaller objectives. Here's a beginner's guide to vapourising the enemy.



Video games are notoriously unfair. The odds are always stacked against the player, who's left to single-handedly take on the entire armed force of some Far Eastern country while General Joe cowers in the safety of his air-raid shelter. Let's face it, there's more chance of bedding Sandra Bullock while the whole sordid affair is caught on camera by Elle Macpherson. Naked. That is unless you're a Gaming God - a Jesus of the joypad. With nimble fingers and impressive joypad prowess nothing is impossible. Except maybe getting off with Cindy Crawford.

The scenario for *Agile Warrior* is strangely familiar. It's just you against the world, kid. You've got guns, you've got missiles, but unfortunately so have the enemy. What they don't have is one cool airplane that can fly faster than Mach 3 but also has the ability to almost hover on the spot - an Agile Warrior, if you will. It's manoeuvrable, it's dynamic and it carries a wider range of weapons than Uncle Bob's Shotgun Emporium. They are anti-aircraft missiles, anti-tank rockets, anti-runaway bombs - hell, there's even an anti-dandruff shampoo dispenser in the glove compartment.

What it hasn't got is a gutsy pilot who's ready to take on the world, but as luck would have it the ejector is just your size. So all you need to do is provide the precise joypad skills and ruthless determination needed to defeat Colonel Kilbabbabbaba's terrorist army. Me? I'm meeting Drew Barrymore at the Wine Bar on Park Lane. Catch ya later...



Agile Warrior



Without Chris Evans' breakfast show to wake them the enemy troops will hopefully oversleep. Take out the radar sites first, then...



Damn, the anti-aircraft tanks have been forewarned of your arrival. You have two options - scarper or blow 'em to bits.



Now it's the turn of the enemy aircraft. Unless they're Sidewinder-ed out of the sky they'll fry your ass.

COMMENT

STEVE

I've liked *Agile Warrior* from the moment the preview code arrived. It revels in the sheer destruction it offers, and anything and everything can be blown up. There's a brilliant stage where a space rocket has to be destroyed, for example, and it can either be blown up on the launch pad or detonated as it takes off. Similarly, as your guns rake the ground, the squaddies it hits explode into a red mush – or are cut in half if they're using a parachute! OTT aspects like these only add to a very fast and well-paced blast. Virgin would never have you believe that *Agile Warrior* is a simulator: it's an out and out blaster, and proud. The missions are packed with sub-stages, but an element of strategy is still needed in order to make life easier as power-ups become more scarce. *Agile Warrior* is never likely to win any awards, but it is immensely playable, has enough explosions to keep the cast of *London's Burning* busy for years, and its ten levels will keep you hooked for months on end. Very impressive indeed.

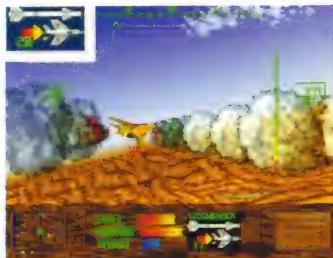
VIOLENTLY HAPPY

Agile Warrior's extensive array of weaponry is impressive and should satisfy even the hungriest appetite for death and destruction. Buildings are torn apart by cluster bombs, aircraft are shot from the sky by heat-seeking missiles and entire cities are levelled with the devastating mini-nukes. But

this kind of power doesn't come easily. Initially the F-111X is equipped with a meagre four weapons, from the weedy chain gun to the more respectable Sidewinder missiles. By collecting the bonus pods left behind by smoking enemy wrecks, things soon begin to hot up...

SIDEWINDERS

Short-range heat-seeking missiles. Three of these babies are needed to take out a single enemy aircraft.



CLUSTER BOMB

The cluster bombs have a wide area effect so save them for close-knit groups of enemy ground targets.



MAVERICK

Guided automatically or manually using the in-built television camera, the Maverick is an excellent air-to-ground missile.



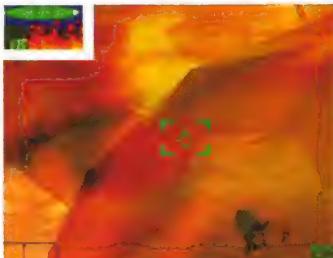
ROCKETS

These beasts are unguided but still pack a powerful punch, smothering the target in a shower of small explosions.



NAPALM

The napalm bomb completely devastates its target and tears effortlessly through the surrounding scenery.



BUNKER BUSTER

This high-explosive bomb is most effective against lone ground targets like enemy HQs and aircraft hangar bays.



AMRAAM

The AMRAAM has a longer range and causes more damage than the Sidewinder – two missiles will destroy an enemy plane.



FUEL AIR EXPLOSIVE

Okay, I've never heard of this thing either but it causes a huge explosion to ripple out from wherever it's detonated.

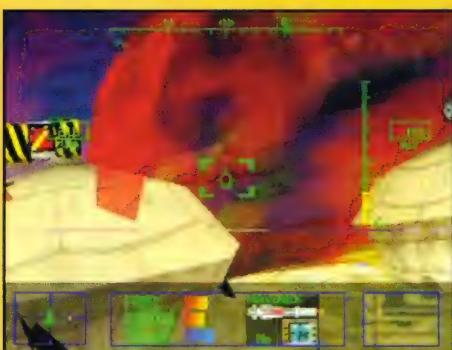


B61 SRAM

The nukes are in short supply but who cares – a couple of these babies and the entire landscape is reduced to rubble.



ODDLY THE EXTERNAL VIEW MAKES THE AIRCRAFT MORE DIFFICULT TO CONTROL – STICK TO THE COCKPIT.



Having minimised any aerial threat, you're free to concentrate on destroying the nearby fuel depots.



With most of the enemy units already eliminated it's time to tackle the problem at the source – take out the enemy HQ.



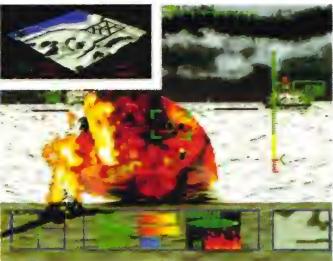
The Ariane rocket must be destroyed before it launches. Use rockets, blast away then sit back and watch the fireworks.

IT'S THE THEATRE, DAHLING!

There are 10 campaign theatres to tackle, although initially there are only three to choose from: Skull Face; Fire and Ice; and French Guiana. Each campaign is divided into smaller missions, ranging from taking out any air threats in the vicinity to destroying the massive Ariane rocket before it launches.



Kourou, French Guiana. The countless radar installations present the primary objective on this desert wasteland, while eliminating the Ariane rocket is your ultimate goal.



Kamchatka. The icy plains of Russia are crawling with snowcats carrying anti-aircraft missiles. Avoid these gits and concentrate on the ice base in which an enemy commander is hiding.



Burma, South-East Asia. The dense jungle of Asia provides cover for an illegal terrorist drugs operation, so fly in low and wipe out the all the labs still producing the narcotics.



Kazakhstan. The weapon and two chemical plants located in the north-east sector provide the bulk of the enemy's ammo supplies, so nuking these buildings will effectively cripple the enemy's advance.



Mediterranean Coast, Libya. Terrorist troops have set up camp on the coast of Libya and are readying their SCUD missile launchers for an imminent launch. Get in there and take 'em out before they're unleashed.



Gulf of Mexico. This small cluster of islands is swarming with enemy missile boats and patrolling aircraft. No main targets to concentrate fire on here, it's just a bloody battle to the bitter end.

COMMENT

ALEX

Agile Warrior is deceptively tough.

While it looks like a straightforward shoot 'em up it takes a fair bit of planning to successfully complete each mission. It's very much like EA's *Desert Strike* in that respect, although the game assumes a first-person perspective rather than the more traditional isometric-3D view. Initially the enemy onslaught seems unbeatable, but as you learn the layout of each campaign and the best techniques to tackle the enemy the entire process of completing objectives becomes slightly easier. Thankfully the heftier weapons available later in the game also make life slightly less stressful, and considerably more exciting too. Graphically *Agile Warrior* is slick, with some of the best explosions ever featured in a computer game - it's worth battling through the harder stages just to witness the impressive nuclear mushroom cloud. Even when armed with passwords to skip completed campaigns even the most talented gamer will find *Agile Warrior* an uphill struggle, albeit an entertaining one. Excellent.

RATING

GRAPHICS	88
ANIMATION	87
SOUND FX	79
MUSIC	77
LASTABILITY	86
PLAYABILITY	83

OVERALL



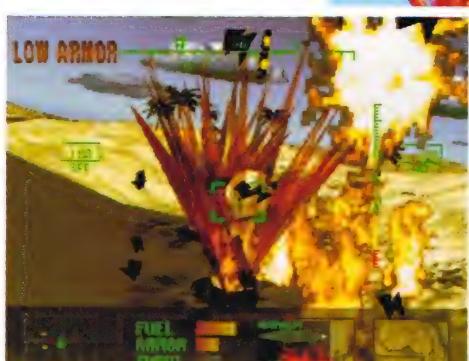
BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

Visually *Agile Warrior* is very smart indeed. It's packed full of gorgeous texture-mapped landscapes, detailed buildings and realistic aircraft, as well as loads of FMV sequences before each campaign. In true military fashion, some meathead officer plans out the forthcoming mission, detailing primary and secondary objectives as well as warning you of any extreme resistance you'll encounter. Listen up, this guy could save your life.



BOMBS AWAY!

Agile Warrior boasts some of the most outrageous explosions I've ever seen. Even the small armoured personnel carriers explode impressively, as tiny chunks of armour are thrown through the air amidst a ball of flame. Even more over-the-top is the napalm bomb which leaves huge craters in the ground when the dust eventually settles. However, it's the B61 nuclear warhead that causes the biggest blast of them all, filling the screen with flame before fading out to a huge mushroom cloud. Awesome stuff.



Read it. Do it.
Be it.
Feel it. Win it.
Work it.
Love it. Use it.
Need it.
Try it, dammit.



FHM It's a guy thing.

GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
CONTINUES: INFINITE
SKILL LEVELS: 5

RELEASE: JANUARY
PRICE: £39.99
BY: INFOGRAMES
PLAYERS: 1-2



Going by the movies you'd think Al Capone was the only hoodlum smuggling booze into the US of A during the 'roaring Twenties'. But the prohibition saw many a speakeasy spring up, and with it a gaggles of gangsters keeping the drinks pouring right along.

But there are those who take the law of supply and demand to sadistic lengths. One-Eyed Jack is such an example. Not satisfied with smuggling a bit of the hard stuff, this bootlegger has kidnapped an innocent little girl and then seen to it that the Private Detective sent to find her sleeps with the fishes.

What Jack didn't bank on though was the arrival of Edward Carnby, close friend to the murdered Ted Striker, and determined to finish the job that his buddy couldn't. It isn't going to be easy though. Not only does he have labyrinthian mansion to explore and a spooky galleon to investigate, but there are plenty of low sorts knocking about intent on pumping him full of lead.

Shrouded in the atmosphere of dingy corridors, Trilbys and tommy guns, *Alone in the Dark* is what you might call a 'game noir', with suspense by the bucket load and hardly a hells chance of escape from the coastline they call 'Hells Kitchen'.



Alone in the Dark

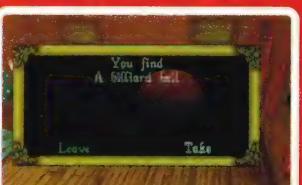


GET IT TOGETHER

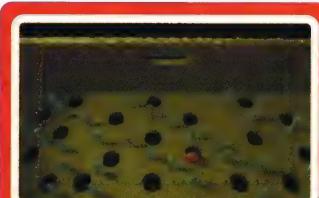
Some quick and flexible thinking is going to be needed at various points of *Alone in the Dark*. Knowing what to use, where to use it and how to use it is a skill requiring a good deal of vision. How do you open a door locked from the other side for example? Simple – you place a sheet of paper under the door, use a pipe cleaner to poke the key out, with luck it lands on the paper and then it's a matter of dragging it back. Cunning eh? Or how about finding Jack's secret room? Let me demonstrate...

The Billiard Ball

After Ed's knocked off all the gangsters in the dining room, an inspection of the Christmas tree reveals a red billiard ball...



...Putting two and two together, Ed goes upstairs to the billiard room. He has no success on the billiard table but then he notices the Chinese billiard table...



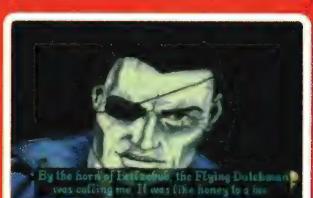
...He slots the ball in. A bookcase moves and Jack's secret room reveals itself. Using the key he's found he opens the door and steps in...



...Jack goes to find her. Ed sees his chance and starts to use the hook he stole off an accordion player to pick the lock. And so the adventure continues!



...But he walks right in to a cell where Jack starts babbling about what an immortal he is. Meanwhile, Grace is creeping out behind his back...



YOU'RE ALL TAKE TAKE TAKE!

One thing that *Alone in the Dark* isn't short on is pick-ups. It's best to take anything that crosses your path because it's going to come in handy sooner or later. Some items link up with others like the rope and the grappling hook. Others have particularly unusual uses. The battledore for example is a clothes beater, but you'll find it comes in handy for beating up enemies when your gun runs out of ammo. For the essentials like ammo or refreshment flasks, make sure you search any dead bodies.

THE GROUND FLOORED

So you like the look of the house? Let's go on a quick tour around the ground floor. You can expect some surprises believe you me...



4. DORMITORY: At the end of the guard room is a door. Ed opens it to reveal the dormitory where the guards bed down. He finds some useful bits and pieces like a bullet-proof vest, a tommy gun and some ammo. Sticking this lot in his burgeoning inventory, Ed leaves the dormitory and the guard room, paces across the hallway to the staircase heading for the first floor. What's up there? Will Ed survive? Will the child be saved? The suspense is killing me!

COMMENT

STEVE

In appearance, *Alone in the Dark* is excellent, with moody lighting effects and camera angles. Similarly, the puzzles are involving and testing. The main problem, though, is that control over the characters is often a bit sluggish, making pitched battles a little too hit 'n' miss. If you see it through, however, you'll find a very enjoyable adventure a little different from the norm, and reward comes in the form of animations which enhance a very nice game perfectly. By no means a classic, but recommended.



3. GUARD ROOM: The door to the guard room is shut but looking in through the serving hatch, Ed can make out two rough types tucking into a meal. With ingenious insight, the intrepid detective offers over the wine which is gratefully accepted and drunk. After a couple of minutes the two men stumble out and collapse. Stepping over them, Ed nonchalantly steps in and puts a token in the organ. It cranks up a tune and causes a gold doubloon to materialise out of thin air. The magic of music eh?

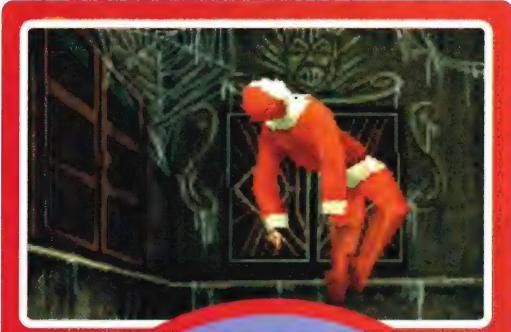


1. HALLWAY: Coming up the steps from the basement dressed in a Santa Claus suit, Eddie finds himself in a hallway. A chef saunters by on his way to the kitchen. Following the chef, Ed wanders past a statue of Neptune which suddenly releases its trident. Stepping out of the way, Ed generously offers the experience of impaling up to the unsuspecting cook.



2. KITCHEN: Feeling hungry, Ed checks out the kitchen for grub. Another cook offers him a couple of fried eggs which he eats quickly. When the cook gets a bit testy Ed grabs a frying pan and sorts him out. Poking about, he comes across half a bottle of plonk. Rather than knock this back, he mixes it with a vial of poison he discovers next to one of the cupboards. But who does he intend to poison?





SECRET POWERS

Alone in the Dark mixes the everyday realities of bootleggers in the Twenties with some pretty weird stuff. Take Elizabeth Jarret for example. This protege of One-Eyed Jack is in fact an immortal witch with secret powers, and she has bestowed these on the arch villain and his crew. Likewise, the house at Hell's Kitchen is similarly bound in magic. There are spirits which haunt its corridors, statues that come to life and even a teleport room where Ed finds himself raised from the ground, obliterated and then deposited in another part of the house.



GRACE UNDER FIRE

While the player takes on the role of Edward Carnby through most of the game, when he finds himself chained up somewhere on One-Eyed Jack's ship, the player suddenly assumes the role of Grace Saunders, the kidnapped girl. Playing as Grace, the objective now is to free Ed. Obviously the young scamp is not going to be very useful in a fight, but being small she goes unnoticed much of the time and can crawl into the smallest spaces.



WHEN ED FIRST GOES UP THESE STAIRS HIS SANTA CLAUS SUIT DOESN'T SAVE HIM FROM A TOUGH GUY WITH A TOMMY GUN WAITING AT THE TOP.



COMMENT

ROB

Ordinarily, this is the kind of game I try to avoid, conditioned as I am to the all-action game that caters for the 20 minute buzz play. *Alone in the Dark* isn't like that. It requires a dedicated couple of hours to get into and – be warned fellow breadheads – it involves plenty of thinking. But to my surprise and satisfaction, I found it's worth the time it demands, proving really rewarding when you finally figure out how to overcome the quandary you find yourself in. Make sure you've got a memory card as well because this is a vast game and there's no chance you'll have it sussed in one sitting. One of the most attractive elements of *Alone in the Dark* is its style, using some sterling graphics and cinematic editing to create a real feeling of suspense. Admittedly, the cuts to low or obscure angles get a bit confusing sometimes, especially if it's happening while you're fighting, but once you get used to this it's easily forgivable. If you fancy a change from all that speed and blasting craziness, why not try *Alone in the Dark* and enjoy your violence at a more leisurely pace.

RATING

GRAPHICS

88

ANIMATION

80

SOUND FX

91

MUSIC

85

LASTABILITY

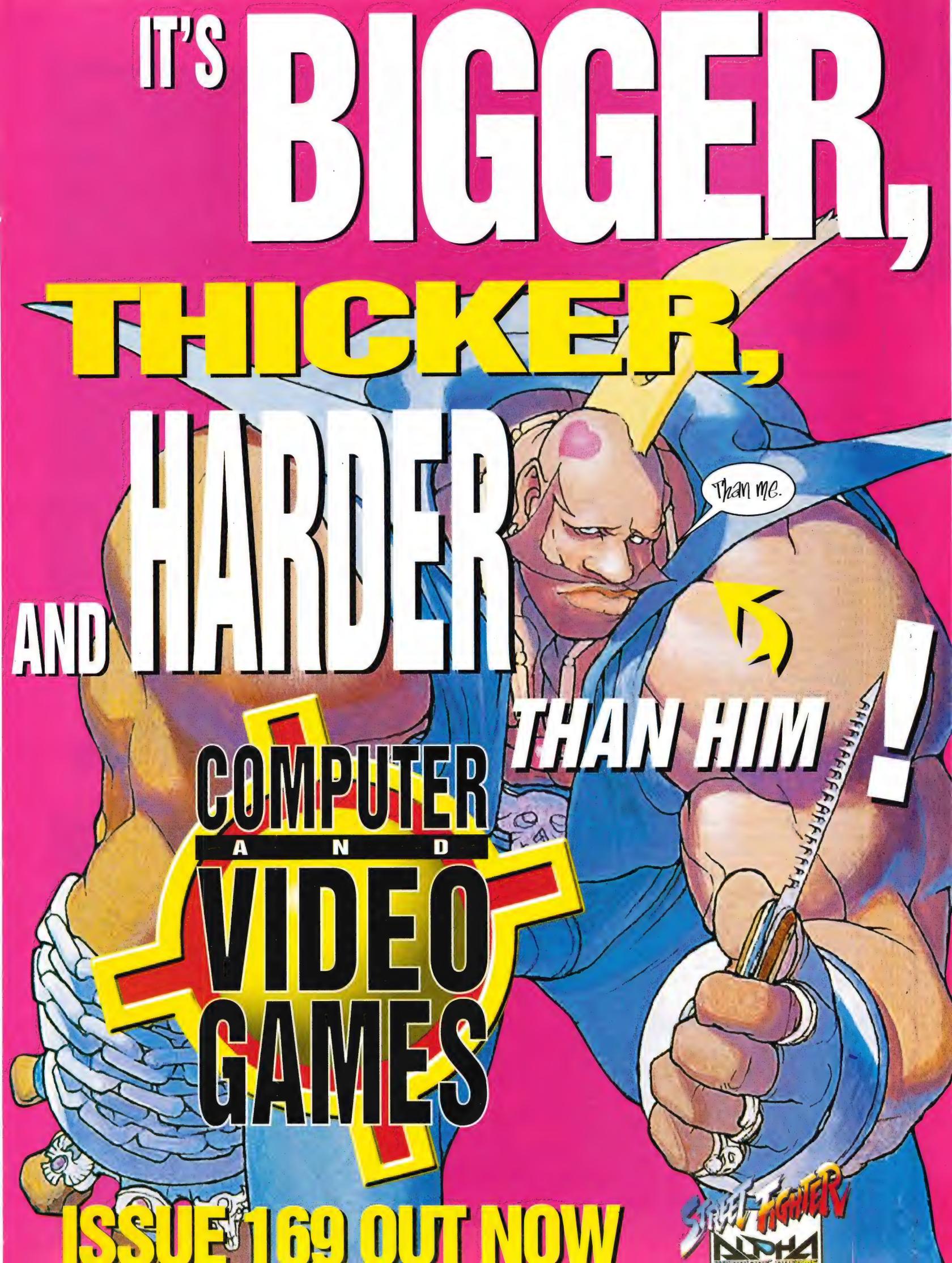
82

PLAYABILITY

80

OVERALL

82



IT'S **BIGGER**,

THICKER,

HARDER

AND

THAN HIM!

COMPUTER
A N D
VIDEO
GAMES

ISSUE 169 OUT NOW

STREET FIGHTER
ALPHA

GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: VARIABLE
CONTINUES: INFINITE
SKILL LEVELS: 3

RELEASE NOVEMBER
PRICE £39.99
BY SONY
PLAYERS 1-2



Considering the PlayStation has only been around for a relatively short period of time, we're not doing too badly for software. It's especially nice to find that at this early stage I can already start looking to existing PSX software for comparisons rather than digging up sixteen year old Spectrum and VIC 20 relics! So let's make this easy by simply describing *Twisted Metal* as "what *Destruction Derby* could have been".

You take part in the game as one of the twelve available combatants, each one boasting a variety of vehicle attributes and special weapons. There are six battle arenas to play through, ranging from a *Destruction Derby*-like closed arena, to suburbia, to precarious rooftop battles. As is always the way, along with your specialised vehicle weapon there are tons of extra guns, missiles, oil slicks, and mines to collect via special pods found throughout the courses, or hidden inside trailers. You only get three lives to play with, but with health rechargers dotted round and about the levels, strategy can be employed to extend longevity.

The enemy intelligence is formidable, and once you get to the stage where you're up against six baddies at once, you really will need all the tricks of the trade to get out in one piece. There's a plethora of information available, so decide what you want shown on your display (ie enemies remaining; rear-view mirrors; radar; etc) and get the show on the road.



CRIMSON FURY

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Driven by *Agent Stone*. One seriously sharp and super-fast car. Not much to talk about in the armour stakes, but extremely fast, and almost impossible to catch when it starts using the turbos.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Crimson Blade: A thin red armour-melting laser. Devastating at close range.



DARKSIDE

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

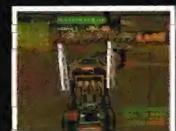
Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Driven by a weird creature called *Mr Ash* who wants to destroy the world. This massive vehicle has only one thing going for it, and that's the fact that it's a massive vehicle! Awesome power. Man.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Death Blast: A thin beam of white hot fire stolen straight from the depths of hell. Apparently.



TWISTED METAL

GENTLEMEN. START YOUR ENGINES!

PlayStation Plus wouldn't be complete without the obligatory 'enormous section showing all the characters in the game' so, without further ado, here it is.

OUTLAW

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



A good all-rounder, this sturdy car is driven by *Sgt. Carl Roberts*, a man hoping to put an end to the contest by working from within. A good choice for the beginner.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Tazer: A close-range only weapon, but one that still sends 20,000 volts up your opponent's wotsits. It is also omnidirectional and self-targeting. La de da.



PIT VIPER

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Driven by the pouting beauty, *Angela Fortin*, this is a tough and sturdy buggy, and as such a good all-round performer.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Sizzle: This is a stream of deadly green acidic slime that burns through anything it hits.



HAMMERHEAD

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★

Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★



A stolen monster truck driven by two high school drop outs, *Dave and Mike*. Not particularly fast or easy to handle, but nice 'n' powerful to be sure.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Crusher: Not your usual special – just drive over opponents and crush them to death.



MR. GRIMM

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★

Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★



An incredibly fast and highly manoeuvrable chopper bike, driven by a mystery man with no name. Pretty crap in the armour department, but with speed like no other.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Death Spawn: A weapon from 'the other side'. Scare the life out of your opponents with this weird, er... thing!



COMMENT

STEVE

Twisted Metal looks rough around the edges, so any initial comparisons to *Destruction Derby* are bound to be less than favourable. However, as you get to grips with the controls of the offered vehicles and gradually make it to the oddball suburban play areas, the game really opens up.

Twisted Metal's greatest attribute is that the worlds you explore are brilliantly realised. While the battle action is indeed excellent, the huge later play areas give the game a real environment, with the player using sneaky hidden routes to sneak up on the opposition. The gameplay is perfectly tuned, too, with power-ups hard to reach but nevertheless attainable, and the CPU vehicles are both intelligent and aggressive, making the most of their special capabilities. If I have any gripes with *Twisted Metal* it is that the split-screen mode is too small and restricts play, and that more levels are needed. But overall this is a playable, if undemanding, game worthy of attention.



ROAD KILL

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★

Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★



A nice little runner this, Road Kill is pieced together from various junkyard hulks, and is driven by one *Capt. Spears*.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Steel Dagger: A giant metal javelin fired at 100mph! Certainly not to take while bending over. Ouchya!



SPECTRE

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★

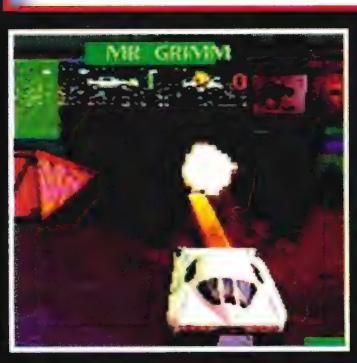
Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★



A classic from 1965, this is a speedy and manoeuvrable treat. It is, however, a tad weak. Driven by *Scott Campbell*.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Phantom Burst: A magical homing missile that will fly through walls and floors in pursuit of prey. Major damage ahoy!



HERE'S A TASTER OF THE IN-CAR VIEW. FROM HERE YOU CAN SEE: THE RADAR (TOP LEFT); THE 'CARS KILLED/CARS REMAINING' INDICATOR (MIDDLE TOP); THE REAR-VIEW MIRROR (TOP RIGHT. ER... BROKE IT I'M AFRAID!); AND THE LIST OF REMAINING DRIVERS (RIGHT SIDE).

SWEET TOOTH

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Driven by the escaped mental *Needles Kane*, this is one weird ice cream van. Handles like a had-dock on a skate board, but packs a punch.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Napalm Cone: A 99 with more than just a flakey finger! A powerful flaming projectile that comes in vanilla and chocolate.



THUMPER

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



An excellent and cool car, driven by LA street kid *Bruce*. It's tough, but also fast enough to get out of trouble.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Scorcher: A red hot column of flame that scorches with a decent reach.



WARTHOG

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

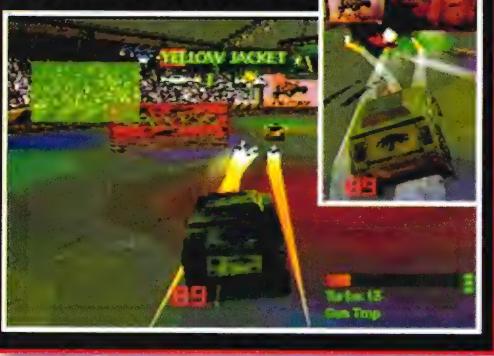
Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Commander Mason is the man behind this slow-but-powerful machine. A ton of armour and a quite excellent special weapon make this a smart choice.

SPECIAL WEAPON

XQJ-37 Hornets: Three beautiful homing missiles that twist, turn, and then nail your opponent good 'n' proper. Huzzah!



YELLOW JACKET

Special Weapon power: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Speed: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Handling: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

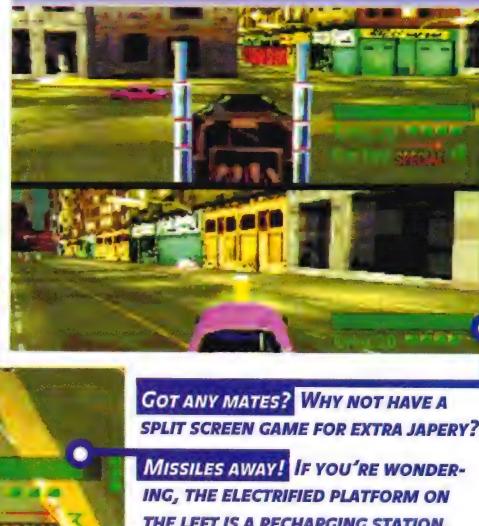
Armour: ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Easy the best all-round performer, Yellow Jacket is driven by New York cabby, *Charlie Kane*. Very good for beginners.

SPECIAL WEAPON

Molotov Cocktails: Nice and simple this, just lob bottles of the good stuff up your opponent's backside, and enjoy the bonfire. Crude but effective.



GOT ANY MATES? WHY NOT HAVE A SPLIT SCREEN GAME FOR EXTRA JAPERY?

MISSILES AWAY! IF YOU'RE WONDERING, THE ELECTRIFIED PLATFORM ON THE LEFT IS A RECHARGING STATION.

COMMENT

MATT

After my first hour of playing

Twisted Metal, I was extremely happy to be alive. I was having tons of fun; blowing up lots of bad guys; screaming around in a souped-up motor armed to the teeth with some excellent weapons; and best of all, I was winning... and then I finished the game. Bugger. Yep, sad but true, *Twisted Metal* is extremely good fun, but it's also a bit brief. You get your six areas to play with (and very nice and big they are) but before you know it, the enormous end of game bastard shows up and kicks you in. Thanks to the password system, you can just nip straight back in and finish him off. *TM* is, however, definitely a game that you'll play again and again anyway and, as we know from *Destruction Derby*, "having fun" is a good enough reason to play a game – even if it is limited. The split-screen doesn't work quite as well as in, say, *ESPN*, but it's still nice to have the option, and it can be a laugh. So, *TM* is damn good fun for sure, but as for whether you'll be coming back after a year, hmm, the jury (as they say) is still out.

RATING

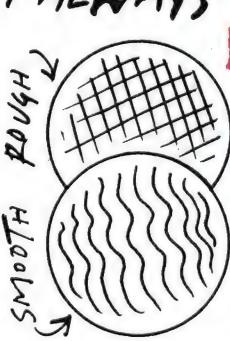
GRAPHICS	83
ANIMATION	82
SOUND FX	83
MUSIC	62
LASTABILITY	83
PLAYABILITY	89

OVERALL

82



I ALWAYS CLEAN MY FACE WITH OXY DUO PADS. THE ROUGH SIDE
CLEAR'S ALL THE DEAD SKIN, GREASE AND GRIME OUT OF YOUR
PORES. THEN THE MEDICATED STUFF IN THE SMOOTH SIDE
WIPES OUT THE BACTERIA THAT CAUSE SPOTS. WHAT'S MORE,
IT STAYS ON YOUR SKIN AND KEEPS ON WORKING FOR HOURS.
I USE OXY DUO PADS EVERY MORNING
AND EVENING WITHOUT FAIL. YOU CAN
CALL ME PREDICTABLE, CONVENTIONAL, WHATEVER;
BUT YOU CAN'T CALL ME SPOTTY.



SPOTS? OXYCUTE 'EM WITH OXY 10!

OXY 10 TREATMENT FOR SPOTS CONTAINS BENZOYL PEROXIDE. ALWAYS READ THE LABEL. OXY AND OXYCUTE 'EM! ARE TRADE MARKS.



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY

CONTINUES: FIVE

SKILL LEVELS: 3

RELEASE

FEBRUARY

PRICE

£39.99

BY

TELSTAR

PLAYERS

1



The 'one man against all the odds' scenario has served video games every bit as well as it has provided large wage packets for Messrs Schwarzenegger, Stallone, and Van Damme. No sooner had *First Blood* and *Rambo* hit the nation's cinemas than SNK and Capcom lined up *Ikari Warriors* and *Commando* respectively. Sadly, in these days of 3D extravaganzas and space-based shoot 'em ups, the lone army hero seems to have died a death. There's no more yomping up screen, lobbing grenades at oncoming tanks and blowing enemy snipers out of trees. Instead, the latest alien invasions and super-lasers have seized the public's attention.

Telstar, however, have different ideas. Realising the days of overhead shoot 'em ups are gone, their titular *Lone Soldier* adopts the one-man army role, but this time his foes attack in the glorious 3D we expect of a PlayStation game. The enemy outposts and large assault vehicles are still there, but instead of small sprites players are invited to blow the shite out of vehicles that look as if they could indeed do some harm. Not only does it steal liberally from *Commando* and *Ikari Warriors*, though, anyone familiar with *Operation Wolf* and the many other 'into the screen' shoot 'em ups may recall a few ideas, too...



GRENADES:

Along with his basic gun, our hero begins with three grenades. Activated using the circle button, the longer the button is depressed the further the grenade is thrown.



Lone Soldier



ARMED AND DANGEROUS

Our one-man army is initially armed with a machine gun and an unlimited supply of ammo. The joypad is used to move the colossus left, right, and into and out of the screen with a cross-hair sight dangling in front of him, rather like the proverbial donkey and carrot arrangement. Using the L and R buttons to position the cursor, the X button then activates the weapons. That's not to say that superior firepower isn't on offer, though. Just take a gander at these...



FLAMETHROWER:

Complete with this rather fetching backpack, the flamethrower offers a visually impressive fiery death — complete with chilling screams from its victims.

MISSILE LAUNCHER:

Worn over the shoulder, this sexy little number is the most potent weapon in the game. Particularly adept at reducing tanks and vans to smoking piles of scrap metal.



MACHINE GUN:
Replete with infinite ammo.



M60:
Rare, but goes through more soldiers than an Aldershot prostitute.

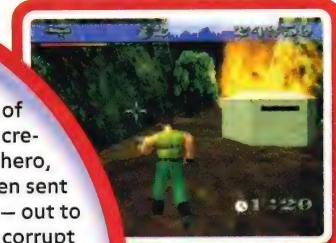


COMMENT

STEVE

I used to love *Commando* and *Ikari Warriors*, so *Lone Soldier* offered both a healthy slice of nostalgia and an updated version. However, while the basic idea of setting these classic coin-ops in 3D sounds like the perfect mix, several aspects of *Lone Soldier* let it down. Picking away at the enemy forces is fun and the variety of weapons on offer adds to the action immensely. My main criticism is everything plods along at a bit of a laid-back pace. The enemy soldiers yomp on, the player picks them off. No real frenetic action, never any real menace. Another problem is regarding the targeting system which seems imprecise at times, and needs more accuracy so distant soldiers can be picked off before they inflict damage. I can understand the lack of immediate accuracy extending the longevity, but it's so annoying to lose energy when you can't target an oncoming foe as quickly as hoped.

Quite simply, *Lone Soldier* is a case of missed opportunities. The idea was most certainly there, but it's all too slow to persevere with.



THE INVADERS

Lone Soldier is broken up into a series of small stages, each of which combine to create the game's four themed worlds. Our hero, who goes under the name of Hank, has been sent to blow up an alien menace – the Varinians – out to take over the Earth. Starting in a canyon, a corrupt officer, General Crumb, is siding with the aliens, and has set up a series of boats, convoys and weapon towers to stop Hank progressing. Following this, the sweltering jungles beckon, with an evil witch doctor using his zombie slaves to add to the already considerable menace offered by more soldiers and larger armed enforcements. Next up is the walled in confines of a city, where crimelords and ninja assassins make up the enemy hordes as the final stage – the alien ship – is unveiled.

Prepare to die...

COMMENT

MATT

On first sight, *Lone Soldier* looks as if it's going to be incredible fun. There are some nice weapons to play with, an endless supply of enemy soldiers to shoot, fry, and bomb, and tanks and trucks to torch along the way. Unfortunately, you've just had a complete run down of the game. The game plods along, occasionally throwing a few slightly different-looking baddies at you, but never really evolving from a point and click shooting game. It's not *Operation Wolf*, but neither is it good enough to compare to the likes of *Doom*. The enemy intelligence is such that, if you take your time, most can be felled before they even appear to have noticed you, or to take things to the other extreme, you can just run through each level unchallenged. It's not dire by any means, but it's not a show stopper. A summary? Fun, but limited. There. That'll do ya.



WEAPON DROPS COME AT SET POINTS DURING THE LEVELS – NORMALLY JUST BEFORE A LARGE ENCAMPMENT OF ENEMY SOLDIERS OR A GROUND INSTALLATION.

THE THIRD DIMENSION

To *Lone Soldier*'s credit, it offers some neat ideas which could only be realised in its 3D environment. Soldiers drop down from abseil ropes, for example, only to hang there when shot. Similarly, targeting grenades is far more realistic, and the kick back from a freshly-used bazooka is extremely effective when viewed from behind the (recoiling) main sprite. Other neat attack ideas include the ability to blow up troop-carrying vans before the soldiers pile out (thus negating the need to pick them off individually), and a pair of utter saps who pounce up and down a railway line on one of those trolley devices with little or no armaments.



RATING

GRAPHICS
ANIMATION
SOUND FX
MUSIC
LASTABILITY
PLAYABILITY

83

76
79
77
70

73

OVERALL



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: EASY

CONTINUES: NINE

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RELEASE: JANUARY

PRICE: £39.99

BY: ACCLAIM

PLAYERS: 1-2



Pop stars are unlikely video game heroes.

Anyone old enough to remember *Frankie Goes to Hollywood* may also recall a rather shite puzzle game *Ocean* released to cash in on their fame. However, the downside of licensing a pop star is that, in the time it takes to get a game on the shelves, the star of it is usually heading for the popularity dumper, thus explaining why games based on Bros, Dollar and New Kids on the Block never saw the light of day. Of course, there are those bands and artists who manage some sort of longevity in their career. Usually ones with a modicum of talent. However, completely disregarding the need for talent, Acclaim's latest licence surrounds the antics of US rockers, *Aerosmith*.

For those of you who don't know *Aerosmith*, well done, you've so far escaped their wrath of mediocre and commercial pap. For those of you who not only know *Aerosmith* but proclaim to be fans, I suggest you either seek help immediately or go into the kitchen and hack your head off with a big knife.

Anyway, with all impartiality here is the plot: *Aerosmith* have been kidnapped by an underground organisation who have broken up the band and are holding them in different places around the world. Your job is to seek them out and save them with the help of your machine gun and a few power ups.

Viewed from a first person perspective, it's all a matter of shooting and more shooting. Are you ready to rock? Oh well, bad luck because this is *Aerosmith*.



DISC GO FEVER

Not surprisingly, the supplementary weapon in *Revolution X* involves throwing silver and gold discs at enemies. More powerful than your machine gun and in limited supply, they appear in boxes dumped from the sky or behind smashed windows and busted doors. There are plenty about and it's worth saving them for when you face one of the game's bosses. Also available is a power-up for your machine gun which speeds up the rate it fires at. For protection against enemy bullets there is a shield, and milkshakes replenish health.



ROCK THE LIFEBAR

Always sure to take plenty of energy from your lifebar are the bosses, and *Revolution X* is no exception. Very tough to beat and usually involving a vehicle of some description, the bosses in *Revolution X* must be tackled in stages. Here's a look at a couple of them:

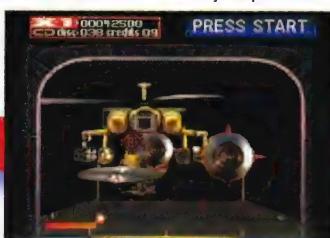


WHAT APPEARS TO BE POWER RANGERS APPEAR CONSTANTLY AND ARE ARMED WITH GUNS. THEY'RE EASY TO PICK OFF, THOUGH. JUST SPRAY THOSE BULLETS AND WATCH THEM FALL.



THE CHOPPER: This is the first boss you'll come across in the game but it's no beginners push over. Practically everything on the chopper must be destroyed. The missile launchers and machine

guns at its sides should be taken out first. Then start pummelling the windows and missile launcher on its nose. After lots of time and effort it eventually explodes.



THREE WAYS TO ROCK

After you've made your way past the enemies outside the auditorium, through the foyer and along the aisles, you come to a room with a star

AMAZON JUNGLE:

Spear-throwing natives are joined by others who throw axes or use machine guns. When you enter one of the ancient stone buildings you'll find yourself faced with the usual gas mask wearing bad guys, and a guy behind a desk chucking grenades at you!



COMMENT

STEVE

Oh dear, this is all very poor. Revolution X was a crappy coin-op in the first place, and its only redeeming factor was the light gun used to pick off the onscreen foes.

Without it, the PlayStation version is little more than a dull variant on the age-old Operation Wolf, with jerky sprites ambling across the screen and huge bosses spewing out so much flak it is virtually impossible to complete a stage unscathed. There's no variety to the action (with the exception of a change of direction to the scrolling), and as soon as you've seen one boss and digitised picture of Aerosmith, you've seen them all. Utter garbage, and a complete waste of time.

THE DESK FIGHTER: When you reach the last room on the Pacific Rim level, you'll find a man sitting at a

desk. Inside, you have to get hold of the keys to your lamborghini. Then it's off to take on the first boss and once that's out of the way you have a choice of three destinations...

MIDDLE EAST:

The first thing you'll see are bikini clad babes toiling away. After shooting the guards supervising them, things speed up with a bus chase. Destroy all the windows, soldiers, and the engine and before you know it that's the Middle East level all packed up and completed.



PACIFIC RIM:

After moving through a few doors you arrive at a goods stockade where there are literally hundreds of power-ups. Once this maze is negotiated there's a factory where babes in bikinis are being held. Last to tackle on this level is the boss sitting behind an unusual rocket-powered desk...



COMMENT

ROB

Save Aerosmith?!

Are you kidding?!

Personally I'd like to shake the hand of the man who kidnapped them and try to convince him to go for Bon Jovi next. Eventually we might be able to eradicate every middle-of-the-road American rock band and save the world from the pestilence that is the air-punching blonde permed rock rebel. Twats! The irony is that Revolution X is the perfect game for such rockers, sporting all the quality, taste and style of their idols – none. The animation wouldn't turn heads on a 16-bit machine, the graphics turn my stomach just thinking about them – those blocky 'rock chicks' in bikinis, grabbing the keys to your lamborghini etc. – and the action made me want to go to sleep. This is a mundane and dull Operation Wolf style game, swapping gun-ho soldiers and guerrilla warfare for blokes in gas masks and babes in cages. It's shoddy and it's tacky and fans of Aerosmith will probably love it. You want a revolution? Then look elsewhere, because you'll find nothing here but Revolution Xrement.

RATING

GRAPHICS
ANIMATION
SOUND FX
MUSIC

52

ANIMATION
SOUND FX
MUSIC

46

MUSIC
LASTABILITY

83

LASTABILITY
PLAYABILITY

85

PLAYABILITY

40

OVERALL

55

48



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: VARIABLE
CONTINUES: N/A
SKILL LEVELS: 3

RELEASE	NOVEMBER
PRICE	£44.99
BY	EA
PLAYERS	1-8



Golf. Hmm, Steve wasn't wrong when he said "Golf" in a slightly sarcastic 'not much fun' sort of way during an earlier preview, and for that reason alone, I've chosen to start this piece in much the same way. So here we go. Golf. There, that's that out of the way.

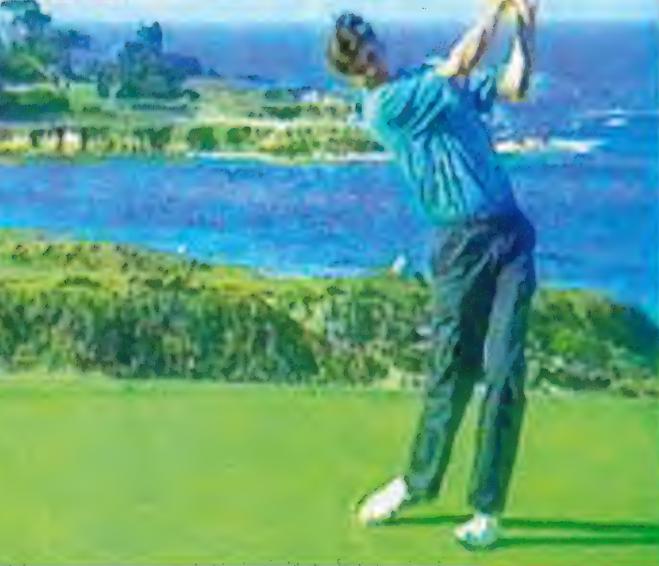
Yes, if I had my way, no-one would ever make another golf game until I was dead and buried. It's not that I hate them — in fact I've thoroughly enjoyed the odd one over the years — it's just that, in my opinion, once you've played one, you've pretty much played them all. Would it for instance surprise you to learn that in *PGA Tour 96* you have to select the club of your choice depending on terrain type, distance, wind, and obstacles? No? Well how about the fact that you press fire once to start the power bar, twice to select the strength, and thrice to hit the shot (with or without slice and hook depending on your accuracy). Still familiar? Er, well how about the option play in practice mode, through an entire tournament, or in a 'skins' or knockout competition? No? Well it is a straight sports simulation — what do you expect! Either you like these things or you don't.

Of course, being an EA product, it is covered in bells and whistles like never before (with digitised graphics, tons of samples, and loads of FMV), but whether these make any difference to the overall game, I think you'll have to weigh that up for yourself.



FMV MALE BONDING. AND AT NO EXTRA COST! "MAN, I LOVE YOU."

PGA Tour 96

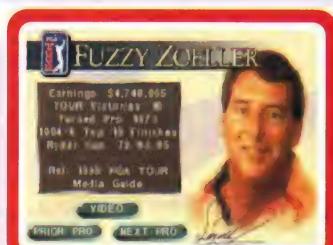


WHAT DOES PRACTICE MAKE?

Should you feel so inclined, you can practice holes from both courses, selecting the ones you want with but the touch of a button. Super.



"Hi! My name's Fuzzy!"



If you can't be bothered to create a player from scratch, there are a number of pro golfers already included in the program to choose from.

And here's that handsome devil Fuzzy close-up. Of course, you'll no doubt be gagging to see the fella in action, so...

...here he is in the flesh! Each pro has a short clip showing some special moment from their career. Very nice.

IT'S A BEAUTY!



Hitting the ball is a simple affair. First of all, check the wind direction and strength, and then use the target display (the yellow arrow) to aim your shot.



The first click sends the power bar racing to the top, where you should try to click again when it's over the yellow band.



The bar then runs back down, where you should attempt to click when it's over the lower yellow band. Too early and you'll hook it, too late and you'll slice.



I actually sliced this shot a bit, but the strength was pretty good so we should be okay.

COMMENT

STEVE

First of all, ignore the shite Richard Clayderman music which opens *PGA*, and you'll be initially impressed with the Sony version. The animation is excellent, and there are enough options to keep most armchair golfers happy, but the dodgy putting system will soon have even Brucey biting his wig. Accuracy is everything in a golf game, but when a much-needed putt is let down by a ball which rolls along only to stop dead in its tracks, the swearing soon starts. This problem also affects longer shots, marring an otherwise fine sim. Good, but not as good as past versions, so roll on *Actua Golf*.



A bit further down the fairway, and the story's much the same as before. A three iron from here methinks.

OF COURSE

As well as getting the computer-generated flyby of each hole as you play, you can view a short video about the entire course. This isn't actually very helpful as far as playing the game goes, but those clever people at EA know what suckers you all are for a bit of full-motion video!



The flag's in sight. All I have to do is get it past the bunkers ahead.



And here we are. One last chip up onto the green...



...where things are looking pretty groovy.



Which just leaves me to put this in from 16 feet. Unfortunately, this is where the control system fails to deliver the control needed, leading to yet another game of 'back and forth'. D'oh!

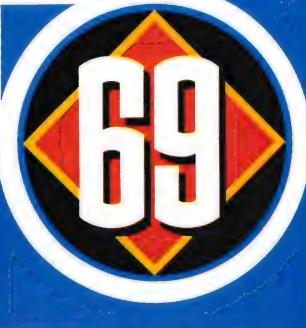
COMMENT

MATT

All said and done, this is a good golf game – nothing more, nothing less. The presentation is pretty, the game is quick to access, and it's relatively fun to play. My main argument with all golf games, however, is that behind the attractive facade, you're dealing with nothing more than a saucy reactions test. Once clubs are chosen and fade/draw etc. effected, it really boils down to how good you are at stopping a moving power bar where you want. Practice on a fruit machine and there's nothing to worry about. Change the difficulty level and it simply makes the bar faster and the need for accuracy greater. Two courses isn't a tremendous amount, but course disks will be available at a later date, and the various play modes help keep things interesting (slightly). The video clips, flyby views and commentary are very nice if you can be bothered, but I'm still not overwhelmed by *PGA*. I can see that if you were a real golf nut, there's a lot here to keep you happy, but I'm still a bit too concerned about the sometimes harsh putting settings to be convinced.

RATING

GRAPHICS	69
ANIMATION	66
SOUND FX	69
MUSIC	68
LASTABILITY	71
PLAYABILITY	73
OVERALL	73



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM
CONTINUES: SAVE GAME
SKILL LEVELS: 1

RELEASE DECEMBER
PRICE TBA
BY SONY
PLAYERS 1



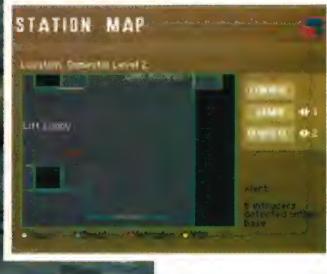
Defcon 5 is an odd cookie. While it looks like a fairly straightforward *Doom*-inspired shoot 'em up, it tries so hard to be something more. It succeeds to some extent, and is essentially an arcade adventure that relies more on strategic planning rather than an itchy trigger finger.

As a Cyberneer (a sort of virtual reality computer repair bloke) you've been singled-out to get the automated defences of MRP-6F up and running by tapping into the main computer and downloading the software. The first-person view, in which most of the game is set, is more of a navigational tool used to simply explore the defence colony MRP-6F rather than serving as a battle ground for fighting the invading aliens. Admittedly there are occasions when you'll have no other option but to engage the intruders mono-mono, but most of your time is spent searching for software pads and invaluable power-ups, vital for getting the colony computer systems back on-line. Of course, it's never that simple and within minutes of entering the complex, aliens attack.

So what now? Fight 'em off with the one remaining fire axe or scarper? Well it's really up to you. You can try and fend off the aliens by activating the outer defence turrets and assigning patrol routes to the internal combat droids, or alternatively opt for the more sensible choice and run for your life. However, before you can escape the clutches of the attacking robots you need to initialise the colony self-destruct sequence, but to do that you need the correct keypad. Unfortunately, to get the keypad you need security clearance and... oh, why is life always so difficult?



Defcon 5



I WANT IT ALL

There are only a handful of collectibles in *Defcon 5* but each is invaluable to your mission – providing you can find the damn things!



MEDI-KIT

Pretty self-explanatory really. Tops up your energy bar, albeit only slightly.



AMMUNITION CRATE

D'oh, without bullets how are you gonna get rid of the enemy – use harsh language?



DROID SECURITY PASS

Grab this security pad to enable both the combat and reconnaissance droids.



DESTRUCT PASS

Before the self-destruct sequence can be initiated you'll need to find this pad.

WHERE AM I?

Like a pair of tight drain-pipe jeans, *Defcon 5* takes some time to get into. Dumped unceremoniously on the mining planet MRP-6F, knowing little about the task ahead, you're left to wander aimlessly through the vast colony until you eventually manage to log-on to one of the VOS computer terminals. Through on-screen prompts you're told the only way to gain security clearance is to locate the main terminal,

which is located in the control room. By riding the limo car across to Admin Level 2, then the taking an elevator to Admin Level 6 and finally up to the control centre you find the main terminal. Once there, the defence laser turrets can be activated and the reconnaissance droids dispatched to scavenge the wreckage of the nearby shuttle craft, which contains software pads vital to your mission. Just as everything seems to be going okay, the first wave of alien craft breaks through the atmosphere and attacks. Quick, man the laser turrets!





COMMENT

MATT

I originally quite liked the look of *Defcon 5*. Not because of the graphics (nice though they are) but because of the strategy and management elements. However, after my first hour, I'd managed to do nothing, find nothing, make nothing work, and still had absolutely no idea what the bloody hell was going on. My fault for not reading the instructions, I thought. No, they didn't help much either. Luckily, the nice man from Millennium sat with us and explained things slowly. Unfortunately, that then took away any excuses I had for the game being less than I'd expected. Alex has played this a hell of a lot more than me, but even in my limited '2nd opinion' role, I can say that you won't be popping this one for a quick laugh. You very quickly see all that's to see, and there's lots of walking, lots of head scratching, and loads of those bloody robots! One for the hikers.

IS THERE ANYBODY OUT THERE?

Generally *Defcon 5* looks very slick, the polished intro sequence being notably impressive, if a little lengthy. As the shuttle breaks its orbit of the mining planet MRP-6F, the camera pans cinematically across the rocky moonscape...



COMMENT

ALEX

When I first started playing

Defcon 5 I was in a state of bewilderment, unsure of where I was and why I was there. With a little concentration and patience you can actually start progressing through the game though, albeit fairly slowly. You see, rather than the game pointing you in roughly the right direction you're completely free to do what you want. This is fine later in the game but when you've only just entered the complex it's downright confusing. The hints from the VOS computers help matters but there's still the element of not knowing exactly what's going on, roaming around in the vague hope of finding something interesting. The enemy robots are incredibly annoying too as they attack relentlessly, and rather than presenting a challenge they just get in the way of the adventure element of the game. To get the most from *Defcon 5* you really do need to persevere through the initial boredom barrier, but even then there is not that much to hold the player's interest – just the same old corridors, elevators and bloody annoying robots.

RATING

GRAPHICS
ANIMATION
SOUND FX
MUSIC

83

LASTABILITY
PLAYABILITY

65

OVERALL

69

73

75

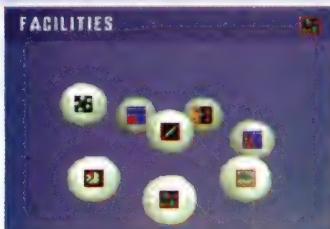
70

OVERALL



RAMPAGING ROBOTS

Even though *Defcon 5* isn't primarily an action game, bloody conflicts are, unfortunately, inevitable. Armed only with a pathetic laser blaster, the enemy droids appear in droves, relentlessly attacking anything stupid enough (namely you) to hang around. While destroying the damn things is a relatively simple process, because there are so many to engage the whole process rapidly becomes tedious and often gets in the way of the more strategic element of the game. A prime example of this is when you're searching each level of the complex for software pads and access codes, having already primed the computer and laser turrets. Armies of robots steadily appear no matter what floor you're exploring, gradually sapping away at your energy which, incidentally, can only be restored if you're lucky enough to stumble across a medi-kit. Ammunition can only be found in the same way, so unless you can dodge the incoming laser blasts (an almost impossible task due to unresponsive controls) death is almost certain.



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

CONTINUES: N/A

SKILL LEVELS: 1

RELEASE

IMPORT

PRICE

£70.00

BY

TOMY

PLAYERS

1-2



The kind of wrestling we normally expect to see from the Japanese involves blokes with arses the size of Bournemouth wearing thongs the circumference of the M25. But what we're talking about here aren't sumo wrestlers. In fact, these chaps are on the distinctly slender side in comparison and they're practising the art western style.

That's right, it's time for those brightly coloured lycra shorts and all that pantomime acting as we enter the ring with twelve of Japan's finest showmen (and two hidden characters). These aren't just made up competitors either, as the instruction manual makes clear by featuring nice photo's of each of them looking suitably hard minded.

Toukon Wrestling differs from the likes of *WWF* in so much as it goes for a more virtual edge, sporting large 3D sprites and a revolving viewing angles. As for the moves, you can expect to see half-nelsons, head locks, pin downs, the works, although nothing quite as fantastical as you'll find in *WWF*. Naturally each wrestler is unique in his abilities and vulnerabilities, and players can take part in the usual tournament and one-off bouts. And that's all there is to it. Prepare to beg for mercy!



Toukon Retsuden Wrestling



ROPE TRICKS

As is the custom with wrestling, there is plenty of running back and forth, bouncing off the ropes. This is down either to your opponent or yourself in order to gain a bit of momentum before a flying kick or wild punch that slams them to the canvas. Likewise, players are also able to slam opponents into the corners where they slump down winded. Get in fast enough and you can prop them up on the ropes and thump them out of the ring!



LOCKED IN

The kind of lock a wrestler pulls off depends at which end of the slumped body of his opponent he is positioned at. Stands to reason really. If a player is at his opponents head then he executes a move that is either a head or arm lock. If he is at

the feet then he goes to work on one of the calf or thigh muscles. Exactly how a wrestler goes about getting an opponent in a lock depends on their style – some are far more elaborate than others – but each of them causes pretty similar damage.



MOVING FOR A BRUISING



There are some really stylish moves in *Toukon*. For example, each fighter has his own kind of jump when he gets up on the side of the ring. For example, Keiji Mutoh, the guy in the red pants, does a gymnastic back flip on to his opponents. Or how about throwing your opponent out of the ring and then pouncing on them? Fighters will even start bashing each others heads against the railings next to the crowd. What example is that to the children of today I ask you?!



KEIJI MUTOH

MASAHIRO CHONO



KENSUKE SASAKI



SHIRO KOSHINAKA



EACH WRESTLER HAS AN ARSENAL OF SPECIAL MOVES THEY BRING INTO PLAY.

COMMENT

STEVE

Past attempts at recreating the noble sport of wrestling in video games have resulted in dull beat 'em ups with but a few moves and boring, over-long bouts – just like the real thing, in fact. Acclaim's *WWF Wrestlemania* (reviewed last issue) went some way to change this by going OTT in its outrageous moves, but *Toukon Retsuden Wrestling* tops even this by adding dozens of moves, but remaining fairly faithful to the real thing. Initially, the newcomer player will enjoy the grapples and throws available to each character, but prolonged play reveals even more special moves – moves which are often dependent on being at a set position in relation to the opponent, and split-second timing. Just like the real thing, in fact. It is this that makes *Toukon* so good. It's a game picked up with ease (but mastery takes ages) and an import title worth a look.



COMMENT

ROB

Wrestling has always been a pet hate of mine and unquestionably remains so, but with the recent *WWF* game and now *Toukon Wrestling* I've started warming to the sport on the PlayStation at least. *Toukon* is very different from *WWF*. It's more 'serious' minded although in two-player it's hilarious when you get your opponent in a particularly painful lock and start piling on the verbal abuse. There are loads of moves in *Toukon*, many of which I've still yet to discover. Consider that each of the twelve competitors sports a whole different range of combos and you're talking about a pretty in-depth game. That's not to say it's difficult to play because it isn't. *Toukon* succeeds in catering for beginners and experts alike, making it deceptively easy to get into, but hard to get genuinely all that good at. The animation is rather smart as well, conveying brilliantly some of those arm braces, throws and head locks. While falling short of a classic, *Toukon* offers plenty of fun and some genuinely in-depth gameplay.

RATING

GRAPHICS	84
ANIMATION	85
SOUND FX	78
MUSIC	60
LASTABILITY	82
PLAYABILITY	85
OVERALL	84



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: MEDIUM

CONTINUES: 3

SKILL LEVELS: 3

RELEASE

DECEMBER

PRICE

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BY

SCE

PLAYERS

1



He who controls the spice controls the universe!" – so said Egon Ronay, culinary genius and chef extraordinaire. He was almost right, but it's not spice, it's red mercury. While this rare substance isn't something that goes well with filet mignon, it is proving very useful for the evil Krel in establishing domination over petty Earthlings. Used as some kind of super fuel for Krel's fleet, gaining control over red mercury is the key to defeating this tyrannical warlord.

Another key is an attack team flying the Peregrine assault aircraft, also known as the Warhawk. It's down to the plucky pilot and his weaponry officer to take to the skies in six chaotic war zones in order to fulfil their weighty mission and get their hands on some of the red stuff. The odds stacked against them are so high that God is smiling on the top of them. The only hope they have is an ample supply of weapons, a pick-up here and there, the virulent support of their commanding officer and whatever aerial talent they can muster up.

So prepare to embark on a 3D shoot 'em up fest that sees pyramids surging up from the earth, volcanoes violently erupting, swarms of enemy fighters and more explosions than you could wave a wet blanket over.

Jump in that Hawk because this time it's war! Yeehaha!



MACHINE GUN: As you could probably guess, a machine gun isn't a particularly awesome weapon. Use it only when you're out of all other ammo or for dog-fights with other aircraft.

Warhawk

COCKPIT WITH A VIEW

There are a total of four viewing perspectives from which to play Warhawk. There is the in-cockpit view which puts you right in the action and three outside perspectives. The first of these makes it easier to feel how the ship moves, the second makes it easier to dodge incoming fire but as for the third, it's so far away I can't really see what the point of it is. Novel idea nonetheless.



BIG GUNS LITTLE GUNS

The Peregrine comes packed to the teeth with state-of-the-art weapons. Although only a limited amount of ammo is available, there are pick ups dotted about to replenish your supplies. The arsenal is as follows...



ROCKETS: The comes with a plentiful supply of rockets. Powerful as they are the major drawback with them is that they involve aiming yourself which isn't always easy.



LOCK ON'S: They do as they say really. The Warhawk doesn't come with a particularly large supply of them. Lock on's a single missiles that lock on the nearest enemy.



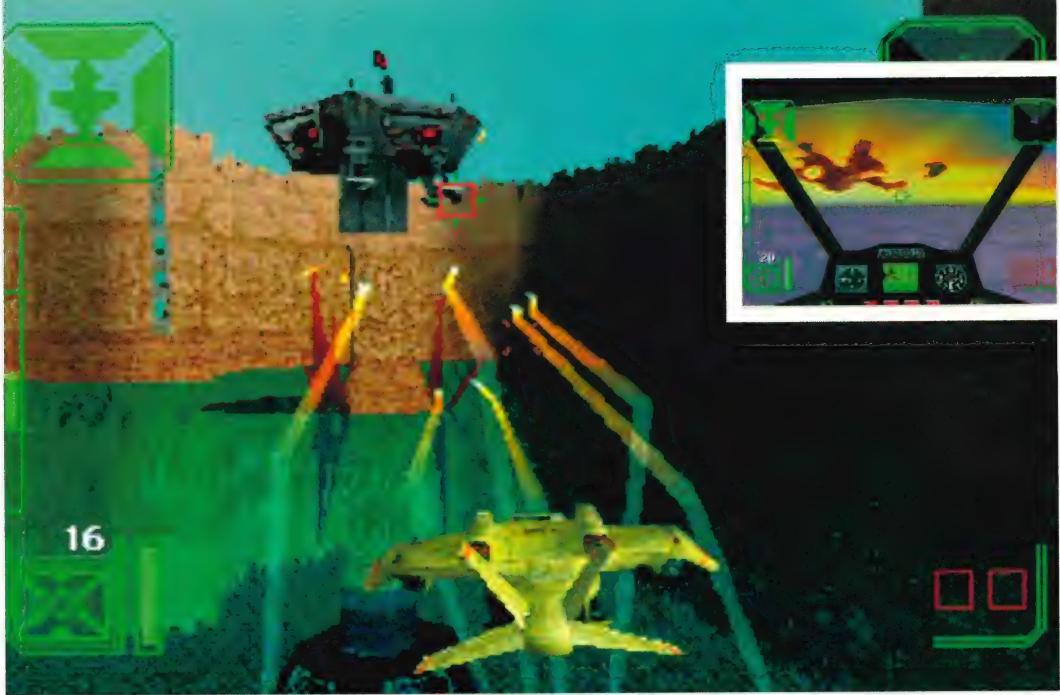
With an enemy in their sights the brave crew of the Warhawk release a rocket.

CONTROL FREAK

While controlling the Warhawk isn't especially complicated it still takes a bit of getting used to. The realistic inertia makes it feel like you're flying a Harrier jump jet, enabling you to stop in mid-air and hover. The ship can also roll left and right, something that comes in handy when you're trying to dodge bullets from enemy aircraft or missiles from ground-to-air cannons. But what you can't do is a loop the loop – not that you'd necessarily want to – because when you reach a certain altitude, freak atmospheric conditions throw up lightning that damages the aircraft.



SWARMERS: My favourite weapon of all, swarms are a bit like lock on's, homing in on the nearest enemy but rather than a single missile these are multiple and they look gorgeous.



16

COMMENT

MATT

I've been looking forward to *Warhawk* since I first saw it some while ago. Although it doesn't quite live up to the picture I've been painting inside my head, it still remains more instantly playable than, say, *Agile Warrior*. The craft 'feels' pretty groovy to fly, and the weapons have some excellent graphical effects. The controls can be a bit of a handful to start with – but are not impossible to master – and there are some nicely designed levels that allow you to show off your craft's manoeuvrability. The missions are crafted like so many before, with the destruction of a number of lesser targets calling forth a somewhat larger enemy from hiding. The level types are varied too, so while Level One leaves you free to fly around an open landscape, Level Two forces you down narrow canyons full of gun emplacements and enemy crafts. As Rob says, *Warhawk*'s not a classic, but it's still good fun.

WAR TALK

Warhawk features some lengthy video sequences. In these, the cute but cold Commander Jassic reels off the orders, while the two flying aces throw in the occasional high adrenaline quip and generally look American. After each mission they return battle worn to be told that they've got to get straight back out there. Bummer eh? There are also cut in sequences in the game when the boss arrives or a when the primary objective of the mission is completed. They look pretty darn smart too.



PLASMA CANNON: There is lots of ammo for this. Players can either fire one pulse after another or charge it up by keeping a finger on the button. This releases a more powerful shot.



COMMENT

ROB

When I first started playing *Warhawk*, I thought I was looking at something close to a flight sim. Initially the controls seem a bit on the complicated side but this is something you get the knack of with time. After this it begins to become apparent that *Warhawk* is actually a pretty standard 3D shoot 'em up. Well, I say standard, but the graphics are far from it, sporting some beautifully rendered sprites, hugely detailed backdrops and fine animation. The weapons look particularly impressive, with the swarms streaming into the distance locked on to their target, or a shot from the plasma rifle portending destruction. Ultimately though I didn't feel that *Warhawk* had the magic factor capable of making it a classic. Maybe it was my phobia of games that look remotely like involved sims, or maybe it was that, for all its high paced action, *Warhawk* didn't really thrill me as much as I expected. Or maybe I'm just a grumpy bastard. In any case, although *Warhawk* still gets a thumbs up, there's just no huge grin to go with it.

RATING

GRAPHICS	85
ANIMATION	84
SOUND FX	86
MUSIC	82
LASTABILITY	82
PLAYABILITY	80
OVERALL	82



GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: AVE
CONTINUES: INFINITE
SKILL LEVELS: 5

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BY SUNSOFT
PLAYERS 1-2



Puzzle games, by their very nature, do not require a scenario. Why do the Tetris blocks fall into the play area for assembling by the player? Because it's fun. I mean, you don't do a crossword in the paper because the fate of the mighty Threagan Empire rests on it, so why bother adding a cautious tale of empire building to a game where your organisational skills are required.

Step forward, the accused: the Japanese.

Exhibit One: what started off as Sega's rival to *Tetris*, *Columns*, not only underwent numerous sequels which added nothing new to the series, but as it reached its third and fourth incarnations, its scenario started babbling about how *Columns* influenced the Egyptians.

Exhibit Two: Sega of Japan were also guilty of taking an rather neat puzzler (again very akin to *Columns*) called *Puyo Puyo* and, for its UK release, bunged Sonic's nemesis, Doctor Robotnik into a newly-added scenario. Why? Are we so shallow we won't buy good games unless Sonic or some other cutesy character is on the title screen?

Obviously because, in **Exhibit Three**, Marubeni have imported Sunsoft's *Hebereke Popoitto* into the UK, and we find ourselves assuming the persona of a character straight out of a 'I Can Read' book, as we take on an assortment of equally scarcely-drawn fish, bear and rabbit opponents. Sheesh.



DETONATIONS CAUSE CHAIN REACTIONS AS THE BLOBS DROP DOWN. THE RESULTANT SEQUENCE IS THEN GIVEN A BONUS VALUE, WHICH IS ADDED TO THE PLAYER'S SCORE.

HEBEREKE

TWO-ON-ONE ACTION

Popoitto offers a two-player mode where the participants are duly invited to choose a character each, and defeat their opponent with crafty screen-filling techniques. Whenever a line of coloured blobs are removed, the resultant explosion causes a chain-reaction which causes any above to drop down or shift into the freshly-created gap. If, as a result of this, another four like-coloured blobs are removed, a number of randomly-coloured blobs drop into the second player's screen, making their life even harder. Similarly, larger chain-reactions cause more blobs to drop onto your foe, while they can turn the tables and do the same to you. The match is ended when one of the two players' screen is filled to the brim, and no more can enter.



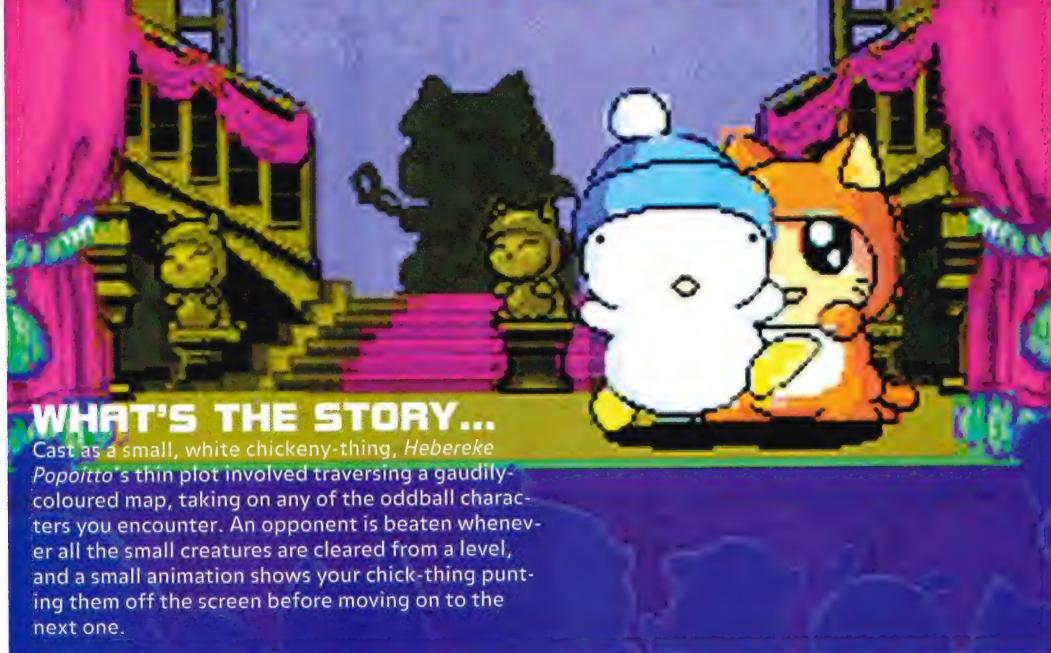
PLAYER ONE FRUSTRATES HIS OPPONENT BY SENDING A WAVE OF BLOBS INTO THE RIGHT-HAND PLAY AREA.



RIDDLE ME THIS

Hebereke Popoitto is basically a game of colour co-ordination. In time-honoured fashion, the player is left to arrange a series of linked, dual-coloured blobs which drop from the top of the screen into the rectangular play area below. These blobs come in an assortment of primary colours and, when arranged into lines of four or more, disappear from the play area. To this end, the minimalist controls allow the player to spin the blocks around so that, in theory, producing the necessary lines is made easier. However – and you knew there would be one – the speed of the blocks increases as the game progresses, and an extra hazard comes in the form of small coloured creatures which scurry across the dropping area. Coincidentally, these creatures are of the same colours as the blobs and lining three blobs on top of one such creature removes them from the play area. When all the creatures are disposed of this way, the next, harder level is displayed. And as the game progresses, the little beasts start moving around, making things even harder. Gasp.

POPOITTO



WHAT'S THE STORY...

Cast as a small, white chick-thing, *Hebereke Popoitto*'s thin plot involved traversing a gaudily-coloured map, taking on any of the oddball characters you encounter. An opponent is beaten whenever all the small creatures are cleared from a level, and a small animation shows your chick-thing puniting them off the screen before moving on to the next one.

COMMENT

MATT

Let's get one thing straight; we

are never going to mark a game down just because it looks like poo. *Worms* wasn't exactly a visual feast, and yet it still remains one of the best games we've seen. And then we come to *Hebereke*... and suddenly everything goes horribly wrong. That said, it can be fun, and in the two-player game there is the joy of dropping tons of crap on your opponent's head – but this still isn't enough to level *Hebereke* above the level of a cheap GameBoy *Tetris* clone. Though games in the puzzle genre can be good fun, even without nice presentation to back it up, this isn't, and the poor look only adds to the effect. No-one should have to spend forty quid for this sort of insult.



MAKING HEBEREKE POPOITTO LOOK EXCITING WAS NEVER GOING TO BE EASY...



COMMENT

STEVE

Let's face it, no matter how good a puzzle game is, if you have forty quid to spend on a PlayStation title, *Hebereke Popoitto* is never going to be your first choice. Let's look at the facts. The PlayStation is a 32-bit, £300 console capable of the likes of *Tekken*, *Destruction Derby* and *WipeOut*. Secondly, these titles all cost around the forty quid mark and offer rather good value for money in terms of playability and lasting appeal. And, third and finally, *Hebereke Popoitto* is a game so simplistic, you wouldn't lash out thirty quid for a Super NES version let alone forty for a PlayStation one. Quite simply, while *Hebereke Popoitto* is a playable little platformer, it has no special qualities to raise it into the ranks of classic puzzlers like *Tetris*. It doesn't have the playability of *Tetris*, the innovation of adding the creatures to each level isn't enough, and its lasting appeal dubious due to the repetitive nature of the gameplay. The two-player mode adds a little, but the CD would have to be made of platinum for me to lash out forty quid for it.

RATING

46

24

37

40

35

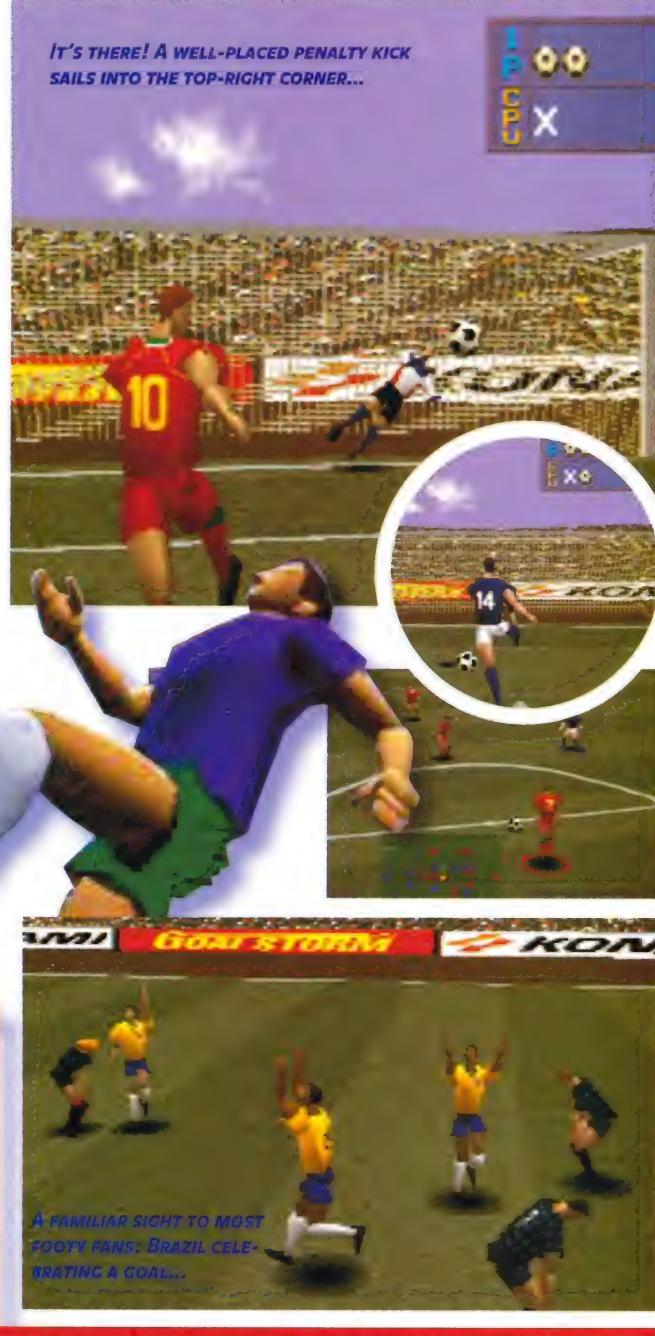
OVERALL

42



nd thus the PlayStation football wars began. Warner Interactive's *Striker '96* was the first casualty, offering little variety and requiring even less skill. Then the import version of Namco's *Prime Goal Ex* appeared, suffering from the same short-comings and throwing a bollocks tackle system in for good measure. Now, Konami are hoping for third time lucky, as the PAL edition of *Winning Eleven* hits our shores with several changes from the flawed Japanese original. With polygon players from all over the world competing in the offered tournaments and friendlies, *Goal Storm* (as it has been renamed in the UK) uses the joypad's eight buttons to offer a wealth of volleys, long and short passes, kick, headers and acrobatic bicycle kicks. An on-field referee is on hand to administer justice and cards for misdemeanours and fouls, while moments of glory are recreated from every view imaginable courtesy of the game's VCR-style replay system.

Goal!



LET'S JUST SEE THAT AGAIN

The main differences between *Goal Storm* and its Japanese cousin, *Winning Eleven*, is that a) the goalies don't fall for the same shooting tactics any more (the old 'diagonal run' trick), and b) the action replays now allow the user to mess about with their replays a la *Match of the Day*. As

the replay is displayed, a small replica of the joypad is shown to the bottom-right of the screen, with the buttons allowing the user to rewind, pause and forward their efforts, or change the viewpoint for optimum impact.



Storm

KICKING BACK

The four basic pad buttons are used for the bare bones of gameplay – ie passing and shooting – with the four L and R buttons reserved for more confident players. Depending on the height of the ball and its proximity to the chosen player, the L1 and R1 are used to pull off headers and bicycle kicks which would make Ryan Giggs green(er). Similarly, L2 and R2 are used to add aftertouch to shots, free kicks and corners making them considerably harder for the surprisingly intelligent computer-controlled goalies to save.



COMMENT

STEVE

After the incredibly good *International Superstar Soccer* for the Super NES, Konami's *Goal Storm* had a lot to live up to, but is set to rot alongside *Striker '96* in the ever-growing pile of disappointing PlayStation soccer games. Every pitfall *Striker* fell into, *Goal Storm* tumbles into: the 'nice graphics, minimal playability' category, the lack of skill and similar lack of instinctive play – whereby success is achieved by punting the ball upfield and hoping someone's there to meet it. Similarly, while there are definite improvements over the Japanese version, it's still incredibly easy to score. As a straight arcade game, *Goal Storm* is adequate – even more so in two-player mode. It's undemanding and easy to pick up. Yet none of the intricacies of play needed to sustain lasting appeal are there, and interest wanes as the few controls and tricks are mastered. Sadly, though, it looks as if *FIFA* and *Power Sports* are the PlayStation's great footy hopes, as the Konami and Warner Interactive efforts leave it straggling 2-0 down...

RATING

GRAPHICS	81
ANIMATION	64
SOUND FX	68
MUSIC	63
LASTABILITY	56
PLAYABILITY	70

OVERALL



COMMENT

MATT

For me, *Goal Storm* both wins and loses. It's certainly fun to play as a two-player game, but while it has the instant 'pick up and playability' we like to see, it's not complex enough to be the PlayStation footy game we're all waiting for. Play against an experience *Goal Stormer* and it simply becomes a matter of 'who can get to that all-scoring position first'. I rate *Goal Storm* for excellent graphics and good camera views, but then have to dismiss it for having too many 'diagonal hot spots'. Not a stunner, but don't completely ignore it. Some, I'm sure, will still enjoy it.

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IMPORT ROUND-UP

TWIN BEE

BY: Konami

Back in those foggy days of 16-bit innovation, *Parodious* was quite a hit and it soon spawned a host of games featuring the amiable Twin Bee characters. But this *Twin Bee Deluxe Pack* is certainly no vintage; growing stale rather than sweet with age. There is a choice of two shoot 'em up styles to play here, either the left to right or vertical scrolling affairs. Whichever you choose you'll find the action is uninspiring and tediously repetitive.

There was a time when the fluffy pastel-coloured backdrops had a certain charm but now they just look bland. What's worse is that trying to differentiate between what harms you and what's useful to you is about as easy as deciding what's foreground and what's background. This leads to some very frustrating deaths attributed to things you thought were simply a bit of decoration.

What really drives the final nail into the coffin is the fact that *Twin Bee* is so easy. You'll have it finished in a couple of hours and be left twiddling your thumbs. It's not as if the two-player option makes any significant difference either, other than getting someone else involved in the plod-along action. *Parodious* fans might get a twitch of nostalgia at the sight of this but be warned, it's not a return to the good old days. (RB)



THE 'BOSS' CREATURES RANGE FROM THIS ROBOTIC CRAB THROUGH TO A STRANGE DOLL WHICH BOGGY EYES. EACH FEATURES A WEAK POINT WHICH FLASHES WHEN SHOWN.



OVER
55



V TENNIS



TWO BUTTON PRESSES DETERMINE THE SERVER'S STRENGTH AND HEIGHT.



BY: Tonkin House

You may be wondering why it's called *V Tennis*. Well, halfway through a match the players rip off their skins, revealing their alien lizard flesh, and then proceed to eat the umpire!...either that or it stands for 'virtual'. Probably the latter actually because *V Tennis* offers about as much in the way of surprises as the English hopefuls at Wimbledon.

Apart from the 3D element, this is indeed run-of-the-mill stuff. Admittedly, with a tennis sim there's not exactly loads of crazy things you can do, but the focus then is to make the gameplay as exciting as possible. It's precisely here that *V Tennis* serves up a double fault. In the first place it doesn't move particularly quickly, the characters strolling about the court with an air of sluggish nonchalance, and in the second place the shots available (lob, smash, backspin, topspin) have little effect on the action. Once you've worked out a routine where you draw your opponent to one side of the court and then hit the ball down the other, winning becomes a largely mechanical process.

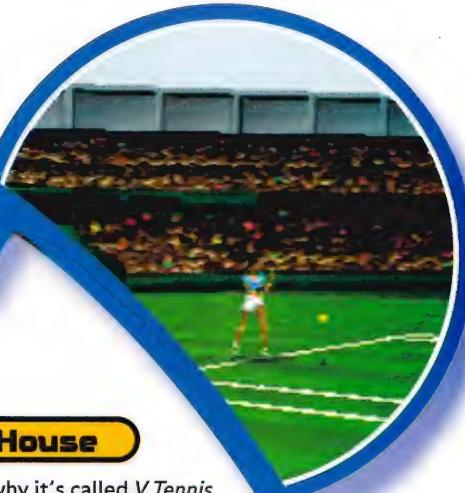
The opportunity to improve on a player's serving, forehand, backhand and agility seems like a nice touch but this falls out of court as well, having little genuine affect on the quality of a player. Things aren't quite so dour in two-player mode although that's more to do with having another person with which to share your complaints and frustrations rather than any significant change in the gameplay. All in all, this is a far too earnest attempt at a visually realistic tennis sim and while it might be 'virtually' real to look at, it's a long way from that to play. (RB)



ONE OF THE MANY VIEWS ON OFFER.



OVERALL
58



EXECUTOR



BY: ARC

As a robotic warrior, the player in *Executor* moves through each level blasting contentedly at anything that moves, collecting power-ups to increase firepower and then blasting away more contentedly than ever. It's all done in a very similar fashion to *Loaded*, although it plainly lacks both *Loaded*'s style and visual excellence. The levels (of which there are five in total) come complete with maps that tell you where the lifts are and warn of enemies approaching and there are needless to say a variety of pick-ups that improve energy and increase the selection and power of your weapons. One impressive touch in *Executor* is the ability to adjust the angle of your view to precisely the kind you want, be it just above and behind your cyborg to provide an overhead perspective. However, the fact that I'm celebrating this particular element in the game is a mark of how little else there is to praise. There are some smart weapons to get your hands on but there just isn't enough variety and they don't appear as frequently as they could. Likewise some of the explosions are impressive but the visuals generally are substandard, the graphics looking suspiciously blocky and the animation a bit jittery. As for the gameplay, I have the same complaint as I have with *Loaded*; the problem being that the action gets too repetitive and after a while I simply got very bored. If this kind of game appeals to you, you'd be foolish to choose *Executor* over *Loaded*. (RB)

THE DISTANT VIEW OFFERS A MUCH BETTER PERSPECTIVE OF THE ACTION.



EXECUTOR IS GRAPHICALLY VERY REMINISCENT OF GREMLIN'S LOADED.



OUR HERO IN ALL HIS CHROME GLORY.



**OVERALL
62**

METAL JACKET



BY: Solan

First person perspective seems to be all the rage these days, what with the likes of *Doom*, *Jumping Flash* and *Krazy Ivan* to name but three. Another to join these ranks is *Metal Jacket*. Described as a 'real-time battle simulator', *Metal Jacket* sees the player sitting inside a cyborg warrior and doing battle in vast arenas with seven other blood thirsty competitors.

The fundamental idea is a simple one, the player simply floating about with gun in hand, ducking behind buildings, collecting power-ups and trying to outwit and outshoot their combat opponents. Where *Metal Jacket* becomes involved however is in the amount of customising you can do to improve your cyborg and weapons. This is done between bouts and depends entirely on how well you do in competition. Nevertheless, I still found it a bit confusing. Ok, so it's all in Japanese, but I can't say I noticed a great deal of improvement after I'd added some special extras. There are some nice weapons to use – bombs heat-seekers, that kind of thing – but the flow of the action is spoiled by the awkward and lumbering control method. Admittedly, this is something that bothers you less as you get more used to the game, but it remains irritating even then.

CAMERA



LOCKING ON TO THE ENEMY WARRIOR.



Maybe with a bit more time and patience I might have learnt to put up with the more annoying aspects of *Metal Jacket*, but what cannot redeem itself is the fact that the overall action appeal is limited and gets boring. Real-time or not, I found that I was not interested in giving up more than a few hours for this game. (RB)



OVERALL
65



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TIPS

WORMS

Worms remains, without a doubt, our favourite game here on PlayStation Plus. Pretty much every lunch time you'll find us all huddled around a desk like a bunch of saddies, shooting, punching, and bombing the crap out of each other. And the reason for its success is that, at the end of the day, it's anyone's game. Even the least skilled player in the world can pull off a fluky bazooka shot which upends the opposing team on to a selection of mines. Here, in this brief players' guide, we share with you some of our findings. All of the following suggestions are based upon the game being in default mode as far as weapons go, but feel free to tweak things to meet your needs.

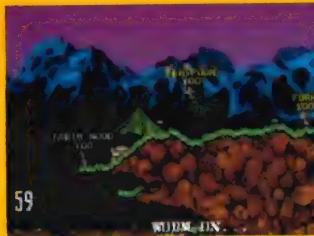


WORMS IN THE BEGINNING...

Fairly obviously, being placed randomly around the landscape at the start of each round, it's very much a case of crossing your fingers and hoping you don't end up with your entire team balancing on the edge of a precarious ledge. There are, however, a few things to bear in mind at the start of each new round.

Early Kills

Even if you start the round with some poor unfortunate standing right next to you just begging for a bazooka up the nads, take the time to look around. In particular, look for worms that are on the very edges of the screen. It's well worth sacrificing one of your precious homing missiles at this point, because a well-placed shot (deliberately to the side, thus controlling the blast wave direction) will blow them out of the game before they get the chance to move to safety. The same can be said for worms standing near water.



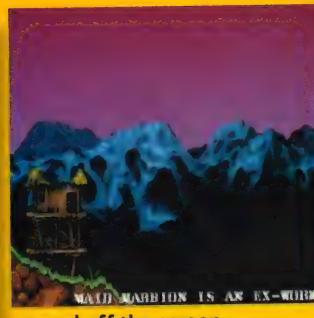
Tea spoon has Robin Hood right in front him, kind of asking for a quick swim...



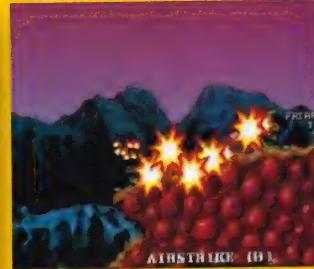
... but Marrion is a target not to be missed.



By aiming slightly to her right with a homing missile, the blast should throw her off to the left...



... and off the screen.



... and laugh maniacally.

THE FALSE AIRSTRIKE

If the chosen landscape is a fairly short island, you'll often get worms grouped very closely together. This is an excellent opportunity to get the most out of your one and only air strike. It's worth remembering that the spot you select with your cursor will be the centre of the strike's spread. Another particularly effective technique is to try and disturb nearby mines at the same time, thus scoring points for the hit and then adding... well injury to injury really, by dropping a mine on them afterwards.



Tea spoon's well out of the action, but that doesn't matter with air strikes.



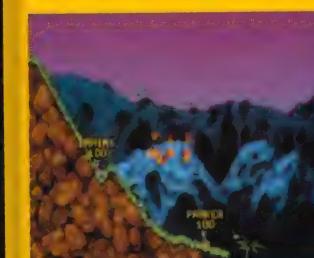
Bjorn has spotted a couple of likely targets off to the left.



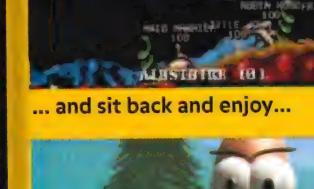
Select your target group of enemy worms...



Off goes the cluster bomb...



... which, timed to perfection, detonates above their heads.



... and sit back and enjoy...



Er. Boom!

HOMER... D'OH!

Never mind dogs, the homing missiles are a man's best friend as far as this game goes, and if possible should be saved until late in the game (when you can surprise everyone who'd expected you to have used them up by now!) The main skill with these is understanding how they react in the second before they acquire their target. Once locked on, they'll travel in a straight line, so it's down to you to get it into the best position before this happens. The easiest method is to fire them straight up at full strength, but you will also need to practice getting them around various obstacles.



Safely off-screen, Penelope targets two unfortunates.



As they cop the lot, Benny heads towards a mine...



... which blows the floppy-haired Abba mastermind even further away...



WORMS



Not the best day he's had!

GRARRR-DERS

The girders are one of those items that you don't really begin to use until you've been playing for a while, but while not particularly offensive, they are excellent for buggering up opposition.

Barrier Method

If you get to that point where you have nothing left but standard grenades, girders can be erected in front or above you to make it harder for enemy weapons to get through. This is particularly effective if you build a barrier right by a tree, as it allows you a thin channel to lob grenades though, but forces opponents to be absolutely accurate.



Benny and Anni-Frid are a bit exposed...



On with the hard hat...



...angle the girder...



...thus forcing Scott to blow his way out!

Cage 'Em

Just when someone thinks they've been very clever and hidden away in a cave, why not screw them up completely by blocking up their exit with a girder! This forces them to either leave the battle and tunnel underground, or waste a turn (and a teleport) by warping to a new location.



Benny's feeling all smug in his hidey-hole.



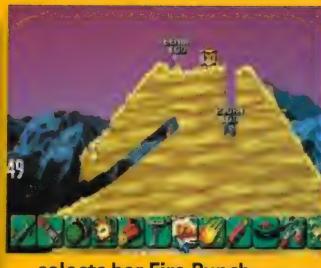
So let's block him in. He's not so clever now!

CAN I KICK IT?

I won't state the obvious by telling you that Fire Punches are an excellent way to knock worms off the screen or into water, but people often forget that the punches also cut through the rock above you for quite a height. This means that you can surprise everyone who thinks you're being a coward by tunnelling away beneath them, by popping up and kicking them up the box.



Penelope tunnels away right underneath Benny...



... selects her Fire Punch...



... and springs out of nowhere!



He's over the weapon crate, and heading for a mine...



But the spawny sod gets away with it. Still, 30 points lost!

ROPED INTO IT

We'd actually been playing *Worms* for about a week before we got to grips with the ninja rope, but it's well worth doing because it can open up the game enormously. It's also worth remembering that while using the rope, not only does time freeze, but you can fall a lot further than normal without taking damage.

On The Pull

Thanks to the variable length of the rope, should you want to get past a mine, you can hoist yourself up and over, get some swing going in the opposite direction, and then lower yourself down to safety.

Collecting Weapons

Before we discovered the ninja rope, collecting weapon crates in tricky locations was only possible if a) it fell on your head, or b) you used a teleport.

Fortunately, by tagging the crate with your rope you can reel yourself in, again, using

swing if you fall too low before covering the distance. Another thing to watch out for, though, is that once you touch the crate it disappears, leaving you to fly over the top if you've approached with too much speed. Just make sure that the last few millimetres are reeled in nice and slowly.

MINE YOUR HEAD!

Love 'em or hate 'em, mines will always feature heavily in *Worms* (unless you turn them off, but that's cheating!) Of course, the skill with mines is turning things around so that you use the mines rather than just occasionally step on them.

TNT Substitute

Though not as powerful as dynamite, if you get into a situation where you can drop explosives down someone's trousers and run away before they pop, mines make an excellent substitution for TNT. The mines don't arm themselves for a few seconds once dropped, allowing you to get as far away as possible. And there you were thinking mines were useless!

Off You Go

A good one for worms standing near the edges of the play area, but only really worth using when you fear a Dragon Ball or Fire Punch won't knock them far enough. Walk up to the worm in question and drop a mine right next to the worm but not quite touching them. Fairly obviously you want to put it on the opposite side of the worm to the screen, as once the mine arms and triggers, the enemy worm will take the full force of the blast wave and, hopefully, fly off the screen. The reason for using a mine rather than a kick is that, should the worm not leave the screen, it will at least take more damage from a mine than a kick or Dragon Ball.



I'm not sure if a punch will get Parker right off the edge.....



Perhaps a mine would be safer.

TOH SHIN DEN

Part Burning Gas!

Yes, strange but true, try this combination with Sho during a match: Circle, Triangle, Square, X, L, R, R, Triangle.

NBA JAM T.E.

Mammoth Heads

Hilarious japes abound, with this pointless-but-excellent cheat mode. When the 'Tonight's Matchup' screen appears, press: Triangle, Circle, X, Square five times for Mammoth Head Mode, or... Triangle, Square, X, Circle twice for Big Head Mode. Enjoy.

Matthew Fox, West Drayton.



DESTRUCTION DERBY

Score Easy 360°

When playing in the Destruction Derby, after the shout "GO!" sit still for a second before charging into the middle of the arena. Now, as you head to the centre, pull to the left or right slightly and, apart from avoiding the great pile up (which very rarely awards you with many points anyway) you should be able to clip the backs of cars as they steam into the centre, scoring easy 360° all over the place. The timing takes a bit of practice to get completely right, but it's worth it in the long run – especially if you're in a competitive league.

RIDGERACER

Play Mirrored Tracks

As you all know, if you manage to come first on all the tracks, you then get to play them all again in reverse. What you may not know is that you can also play them in a mirrored mode. This effectively gives you an extra two versions of the tracks you already know – mirrored normal, and mirrored reverse. When you start the race, drive up to the junction where you usually turn left and head for the check point, but before you get to the turn, spin around and head back towards the starting point at full pelt. It'll look as if you're about to hit the steel wall, but at the last minute it'll disappear and you'll continue the race with the new track. Excellent.

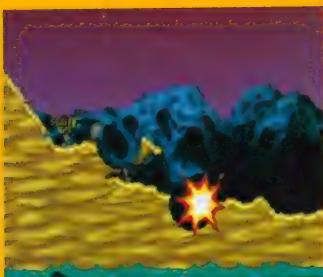
Darren J Plumridge, Surrey.

Play With The Flag

I've no idea why you'd want to do this, but when the checkered flag screen appears, hold down L1 and R1, and then press the following keys for the following effects: UP and DOWN for vertical flip, LEFT and RIGHT to rotate, TRIANGLE to zoom out.

X to zoom in.

SQUARE and CIRCLE for horizontal flip.



The mine detonates, and Parker's up, up and awaaaaay!



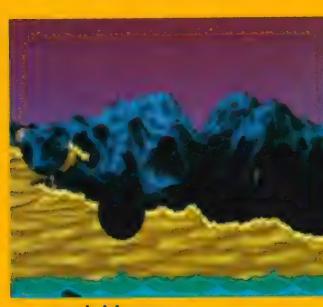
Ferret is rather unfortunate here.



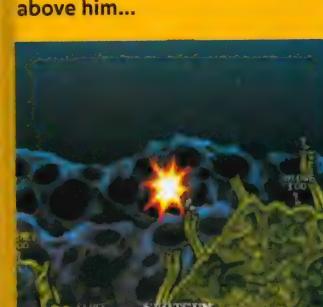
See him fly...



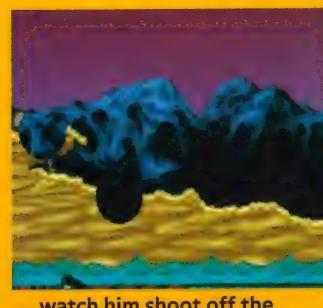
As I shoot the mine teetering above him...



... watch him soar...



... it slams into him...



... watch him shoot off the screen!



... knocking him to the floor.

The Domino Effect

Thanks to the randomly-generated landscapes, it's highly likely that you'll get the odd worm surrounded by mine-ridden areas. If you want to inflict high damage without wasting any of your limited weapons, try this for a laugh. Find an area where there's a mine between yourself and an enemy worm, and then using either a bazooka or a shot gun, try to hit the earth just in front of the mine. The force of the blast should send the mine flying off towards your opponent, blowing up right in his face. This is particularly effective when mines are balanced on top of trees, mountains, etc that are otherwise blocking your way. As you can cause tons of damage without actually getting involved in any combat yourself.



HOW TO HURT

When should you use a Dragon Ball? When should you use a Fire Punch? Simple questions, with very simple answers...

Fire Punch

Sadly lacking the sampled Street Fighter 2 cries that featured in early versions of Worms, this is the ultimate way to show off when knocking someone off the screen. The advantage of using the Fire Punch rather than the Dragon Ball, is that the punch throws your opponent with greater height. Thus, should there be a rugged rock formation between the enemy worm and the edge of

the play area, this little

move will propel him up and over.

Dragon Ball

The Dragon Ball is just as useful as the punch, only with more horizontal power. This means that, while the punch will give you height and distance, the Dragon Ball will knock enemy worms much further in one direction. If in doubt, you can always revert to the land mine [see Off You Go]



Agnetha's standing on a slight hill here.



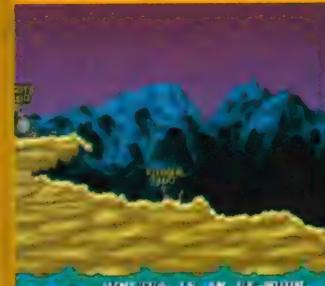
Fortunately, the punch gives her the height to get her up...



... and straight back down to Earth...



... where she slides...



... right off the screen!



Mortal Kombat III

The mysteries of Mortal Kombat III need elude you no more. We are proud to reveal the gateway to every hidden foe, special move and hidden trick in this exhaustive guide to one of the PlayStation's greatest beat 'em ups...

FINISH THEM...

A brief guide to the many 'Alities within. Some moves can only be effected from a set distance, and these have been noted alongside the commands — for example, sweeping distance. Similarly, to save space we have abbreviated the moves into the following for easy reference:

B — Backwards

F — Forward

U — Up

D — Down

LK — Low kick

HK — High kick

LP — Low punch

HP — High punch

BLK — Block

RN — Run

When two moves are linked with a '+' sign, both commands must be pressed simultaneously. Moves within brackets are activated with the first move still depressed. Release button when bracketed moves have been completed.

FATALITIES

Effect at the end of a second winning bout.

BABALITIES

Becomes ineffective if a block move is used.

FRIENDSHIPS

Rendered ineffective if a block move is used.

MERCIES

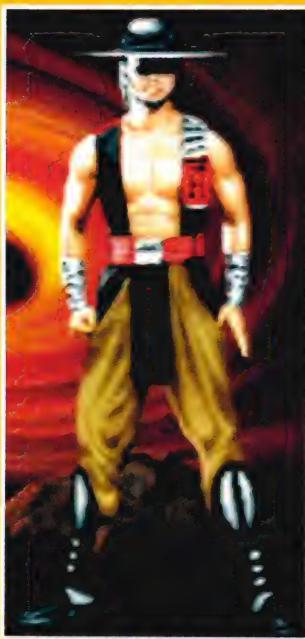
If both players has won a round, these endow the loser with extra energy. Characters all share the same 'Mercy' move — RN (D, D, D) — whilst standing half a screen away from the loser.

ANIMALITIES

Only applicable if a 'Mercy' has been performed.

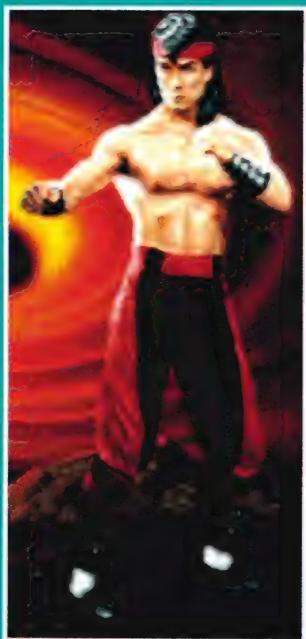
KUNG LAO

Armed with a decapitating hat throw.



LIU KANG

Martial arts hero of the trilogy.



NIGHTWOLF

A new Indian tribesman entrant.



FATALITY 1



HAT SLICE — F, F, B, D, HP (SWEEP RANGE)



COIN-OP — BLK (U, D, U, U), RN + BLK



LIGHT BEAM — BLK (U, U, B, F, BLK (CLOSE))

FATALITY 2



TORNADO — B + BLK + RN (REPEAT)



BURN OUT — F, F, D, D, LK



LIGHTNING — HP (B, B, D) HP (OUT OF SWEEP RANGE)

ANIMALITY



RN, RN, RN, RN, RN, BLK (CLOSE)



BLK (D, D, U)



BLK (F, F, D, D) BLK (CLOSE)

BABALITY



D, F, F, HP



D, D, D, HK



D, D, F, LK

FRIENDSHIP



RN, LP, RN, LK



RN, RN, RN + D



HP, RN, RN, N + D

CYRAX

The first of two robotic kombatants.



JAX

Bionically-enhanced wrestler returning from MKII



KABAL

Comes with rucksack life-support unit.



KANO

Sonya's investigative aide.



FATALITY 1



SELF DESTROY – D, D, F, U+RN (CLOSE)



BIG FOOT – RN, BLK, RN, RN, LK



SCARE – RN, BLK, BLK, BLK, HK (STEP AWAY)



SKELETON GRAB – LP (F, D, D, D) LP

FATALITY 2



HELI-SLICE – BLK (D, D, D, D), HP



SLICE – BLK (U, D, F, U) BLK (CLOSE)



INFLATE – D, D, B, F, BLK



EYE LASER – LP, BLK, BLK, HK (SWEEP)

ANIMALITY



BLK (U, U, D, D) (CLOSE)



LP (F, F, D, F) LP



HP (F, F, D, F) HP



HP (BLK, BLK, BLK) HP (CLOSE)

BABALITY



F, F, B, HP



D, D, D, LK



RN, RN, LK



F, F, D, D, LK

FRINEDSHIP



RN, RN, RN, U



LK, RN, RN, LK



RN, LK, RN, RN + U



LK, RN, RN, HK

SEKTOR

The second robotic entrant.



SHANG TSUNG

Kahn's shape-shifting henchman.



SHEEVA

A female four-armed mutant.



SINDEL

Kahn's bride — with fly-away hair.



FATALITY 1



FLAMER — F, F, F, B, BLK



SPIKE BED — LP (D, F, F, D) LP (STEP AWAY)



RIPSKIN — HK (B, F, F) HK (CLOSE)



HAIR COIL — RN, RN, BLK, RN, BLK

FATALITY 2



CRUSHER — LP (RN, RN, BLK), LP



SOUL SUCK — LP (RN, BLK, RN, BLK) LP (CLOSE)



POUNDING — F, D, D, F, LP (CLOSE)



SCREAM — RN, BLK, BLK, RN + BLK

ANIMALITY



F, F, D, U (CLOSE)



HP (RN, RN, RN) HP (SWEEP RANGE)



RN, BLK, BLK, BLK, BLK (CLOSE)



BLK (F, F, U) HP (STEP AWAY)

BABALITY



B, D, D, D, HK



RN, RN, RN, LK



D, D, D, B, HK



RN, RN, RN + U

FRIENDSHIP



RN, RN, RN, RN, D



LK, RN, RN, D



F, F, D, F, HP



RN, RN, RN, RN, RN + U

Tips Plus

RAYMAN

Access Bonus Intro

Only god knows why anyone would want to do this, but if you want to see a bonus intro, hold down L1, L2, R1, R2, X, and the start button while the PlayStation logo is on screen. Keep these held while the game loads and you'll get a different intro unless you release all the above buttons. Er... great.

Steve Wickenden, Greenwich



TOH SHIN DEN

Desperation Attacks

Should you get so beaten up that your energy bar starts to flash red, try these last minute 'go bonkers' moves to take your opponent with you.

EIJI



KAYIN



SOFIA



RUNGO



FO



MONDO



DUKE



ELLIS



To Get Gaia

On the title screen, press down, down/left, left, square. You'll then hear "FIGHT!", and on the character select screen go to Eiji and push X. Gaia will now show up and you can kick some serious butt!

Anthony, Brentford.

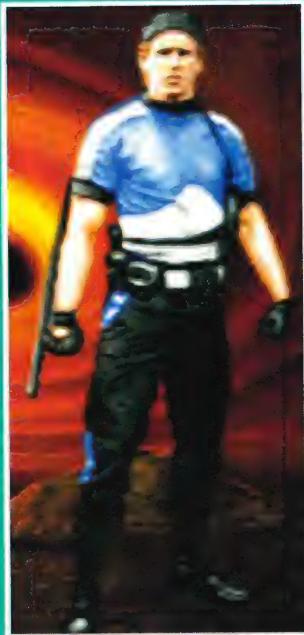
SONYA

An undercover agent out to stop Kahn.



STRYKER

SWAT team member and explosives master.



SUB-ZERO

A new outfit for the master of ice.



FATALITY 1



CRUSHER – BLK + RN (U, U, B, D)



BOMB – D, F, D, F, BLK (CLOSE)



FREEZE BREATH – B, B, D, B, RN (SWEEP RANGE)

FATALITY 2



KISS OF DEATH – B, F, D, D, RN



TASER – F, F, F, LK (FULL SCREEN)



ICE SMASH – BLK, BLK, RN, BLK, RN (CLOSE)

ANIMALITY



LP (B, F, D) LP



RN, RN, RN, BLK



BLK + RN (F, U, U) (CLOSE)

BABALITY



D, D, F, LK



D, F, F, B, HP



D, B, B, HK

FRIENDSHIP



LK, RN, RN, LK



LP, RN, RN, LP



LK, RN, RN, U

What Goes Around Comes Around...





'The more things change, the more they stay the same...' Huey Lewis and The News.

Yes, the PlayStation may be the ultimate in video game technology, but is it destined to become the domain of barely playable FMV movies with occasional interactive sections? Not if the current trend of raiding the graves of past hits continues...

It is a commonly-held opinion that fashion is a circular beast. Memories of taking the piss out of the poor, unfortunate sod who was made to wear flared (or even moderately straight-legged) trousers to school are common in anyone over the age of sixteen. While towards the end of the Eighties there was the "Trainer Farrago" whereby if you didn't need a mortgage to pay for the latest Reebok line with a torch in the front or whatever, you were obviously some kind of social leper. Yet, as the current 'Retro' trend continues, we see old favourites such as Adidas, Fred Perry and – yes – even flared trousers making a comeback, which means that Reebok probably have some ridiculously OTT trainer in the offing.

With fashion on this ever-rotating wheel, the even smaller world of the video game is also in the process of retracing its roots, with seemingly long-gone ideas being revamped to make use of updated capabilities. Capcom, for example, have returned to the original *Street Fighter* for their imminent Alpha Edition – and *SF* is barely two years old! Similarly, some of the 'old school' developers – Namco, for example – can dig as far back as 1982 and the likes of *Pac Man* and the kind of hoary old coin-ops normally found in the rest areas of swimming pools and leisure centres.

In celebration of the imminent release of EA's *Zaxxon* clone *Viewpoint* (itself an update of an update, adding graphically to the original Neo-geo code), *PlayStation Plus* explores the innermost aspects of the EA game in our exhaustive review, while taking in Namco's celebratory oldies compilation along the way, and revealing the tortured and twisted family tree of the video game.

Expect the expected.

GAME SPEC

GAME DIFFICULTY: HARD

CONTINUES: THREE

SKILL LEVELS: 3

RELEASE DECEMBER

PRICE £39.99

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PLAYERS 1

VIEWPOINT



was abducted by aliens once. Well, I say abducted, has-sled might be more appropriate. Newly arrived on planet Earth, they chose me as their guide. Because of the late hour I was a bit stuck for places to take them but we finally settled on the local nightclub, Ritzys. So Bernie Baraka (white, skinny with huge black eyes and an enormous head), Frank Genzork (small, blue, kind of troll looking) and myself jumped in a cab and headed downtown. At first things were swinging along nicely, we were knocking back the beers and taking in the vibe. As Bernie and Frank got steadily more drunk though, things took a turn for the worse. Bernie got a slap off some girl after he said she had a good set of ion particles on her, and Frank got into a fight with a cigarette machine which, he said, was giving him funny looks.

At about 4am we decided to cut our losses and quit the club. Strolling home, Bernie insisted we stop off for a kebab because he had heard curious things about it from other interstellar travellers. He ordered a donner with chilli sauce, and rather than eat it he pushed it against his roomy forehead to analyse its atomic structure. He seemed to enjoy it but it can't have agreed with him because an hour later he psychically vomited leaving diced electrons all over the road.

On that note we went our separate ways. I caught to 246 to Pembroke Grove and Mssrs. Baraka and Genthrok, still in the partying mood, decided to head for Jupiter and check out a late licence boozier somewhere beyond the infinite...

As for Viewpoint, that's about aliens too, although not the kind that might join you for a drink, admittedly. In fact, this hostile batch of ET's are deserving of annihilation alone, and in this diagonally scrolling shoot 'em up that's exactly what you're expected to give them. Quite simply, shoot, destroy and don't die. And if all else fails, try appeasing them by offering to buy the drinks.

BOMBS HORRAY!

In *Viewpoint* the player has a total of three special bombs with which to devastate his enemies. Fresh supplies can be picked up along the way. And here they are in all their graphical glory...

FIRE STORM: My personal favourite. This power up sees a vast wall of fire spread over the screen reducing everything in its path to ashes.



HOMING MISSILE: A cluster of missiles seek and destroy the most immediate enemies. When none are around they glide along until a target is found.



BOMB: This causes a huge nuclear explosion with a centre of impact and then shockwaves which destroy just about everything else on the screen.



POINTS OF VIEW

There are a total of six levels in *Viewpoint* and each of them comes with a unique theme and range of enemies and, of course, they get progressively harder. Here's a taster...

LEVEL ONE:

Dominated by chrome, Level One sees some enemies that look more like mathematical apparatus. Slinky springs twist and turn to hamper your movements, barriers remain shut until they can be cranked open with some accurate shooting, and there are plenty of mechanical enemies knocking about keen on your destruction.



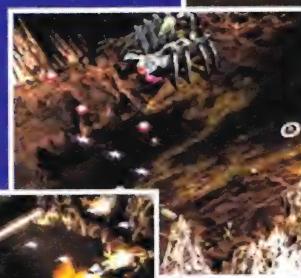


LEVEL TWO : Level Two brings with it a surreal underwater theme. There are space turtles which spin invincibly around when their heads are tucked into their shells. Fish get mean by

springing out of the water or laying mines. Jellyfish that rise up to the surface spraying bullets and sea monsters that disappear in and out of holes.



LEVEL THREE : The theme moves from the water to a serene garden but this is no Eden. Level Three sees enormous slugs stomp slowly about, rolling worms that come whizzing towards you, bees and centipedes and even gates with sharp teeth that snap shut violently. There's also a huge web at the end with an unfriendly boss lying in wait.



LEVEL FOUR : A mixture of ragged rocks and industrial landscapes. Level Four starts to really turn up the heat. There are loads of gun turrets firing from all directions, guided missiles, flame throwers that shoot out blasts from the walls and crusher blocks designed to see to it that your ambitions are mercilessly flattened out.



LEVEL FIVE : Things really do start to heat up on Level Five when the lava starts to flow. Spreading in arches, this level is dominated by the hot molten rock which constantly blocks your path necessitating some useful dodging abilities. Just to make things even tougher, conical rocks jut out from the rocky surface and fire bullets at you.



LEVEL SIX :

Proceedings are brought to a close with a few billion volts of electricity. Sharing some things in common with the first level, Level Six sees laser beams stretching out as obstacles, electricity pylons sending lightning across your path, exploding asteroids flying in all directions and rolling cubes guarding the prize of a power up. Phew! It sure ain't going to be easy!



KICKS FROM THE SIX

As if the game isn't tough enough, the bosses in *Viewpoint* are even harder to handle requiring a good degree of skill and not a little bit of luck to put them in their place. Here beginneth the lesson...

BOSS ONE: The first and the easiest of the bosses to defeat but don't let that make you think it's a push over. Spraying a myriad of bullets and using the two powerful cannons at its side, plenty of fast reactions and quick dodging is necessary. Also, watch out for the suspicious looking probe which surges out at the ship.

BOSS TWO: Fitting in with the underwater theme of this level, this boss is a cyber crab. Of all things it uses lethal bubbles to try and break you down. It also releases its pincers which dart out in surprise attacks. After repeated battering it loses its shell but the crab brain that's left fires rapid crescent lasers to keep you on your toes.

BOSS THREE: This robotic wasp starts off proceeding by spraying loads of bullets everywhere. The first aim is to get rid of its wings so that it can no longer move about to freely. Once this is done it starts firing more bullets out of its abdomen and lurching its head out from its insect shell in an effort to eat the ship. Swat it!

BOSS FOUR: Like the head of a totem pole, this curious alien has four faces and each of them must be destroyed before it is defeated. Now's the time to make use of any special weapons you might have left, and it's a real test of perseverance trying to dodge what seems like an endless barrage of bullets while still trying to get a few shots in yourself.

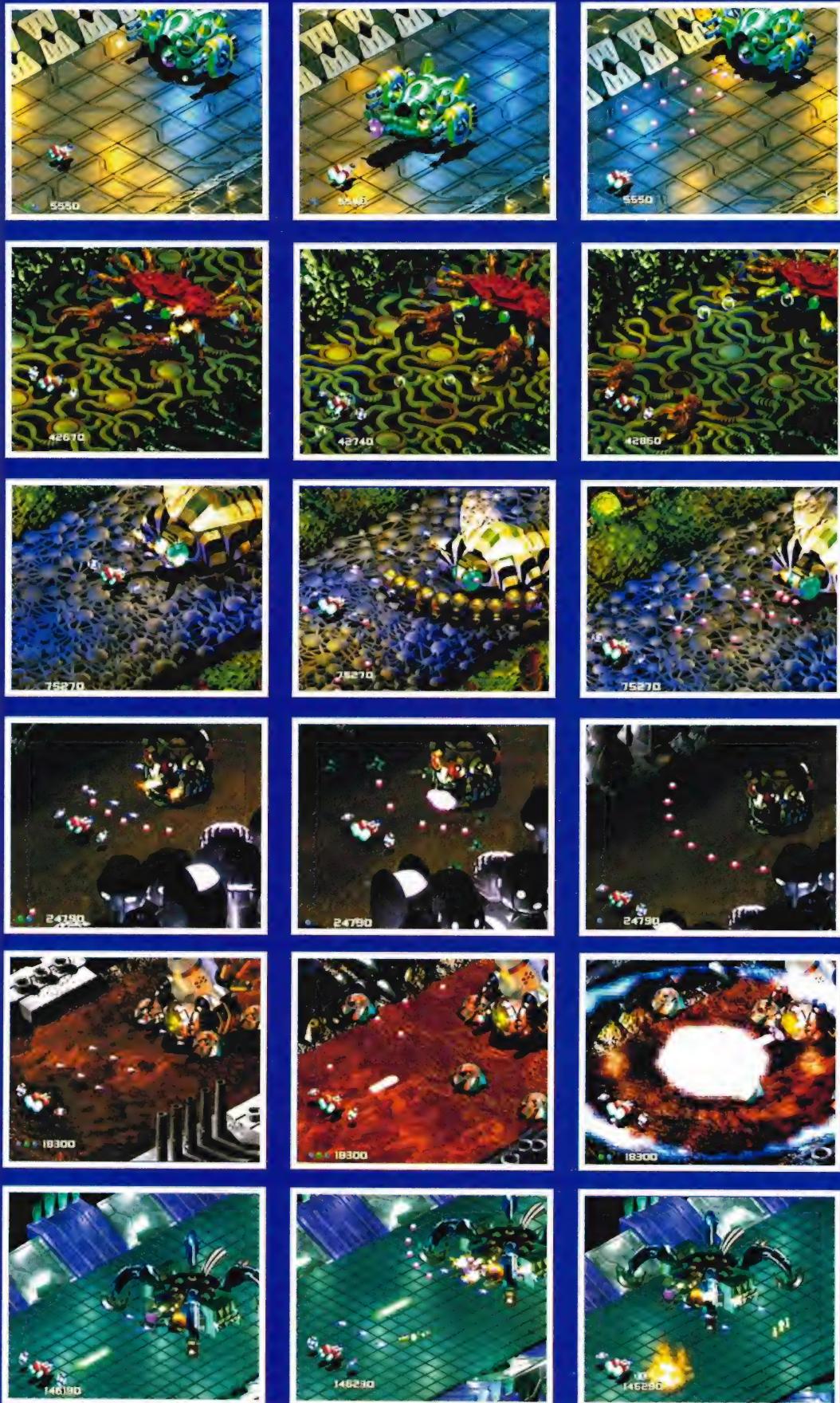
BOSS FIVE: Looking like a chrome plated Fisher-Price toy, this boss is far from child's play. It releases its spinning wheels and each of these fires bullets as it revolves. The central axis between the wheels fires a thick laser beam. It's here that you want to concentrate your fire. Get a special or two in as well, and eventually the thing is history.

BOSS SIX: The final boss is obviously the toughest cookie of the lot. On four legs it launches missiles from its sides and bullets from the front. When your battering makes it lose its legs, it starts to spin on the spot releasing walls of flames. Once this is overcome the true organic nature of the boss reveals itself as its skull heads pulsate. Keep firing!

NAMCO GO PAC IN TIME

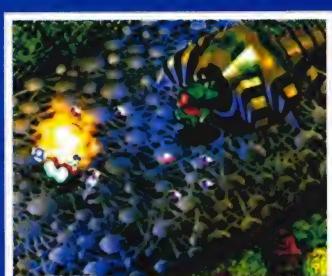
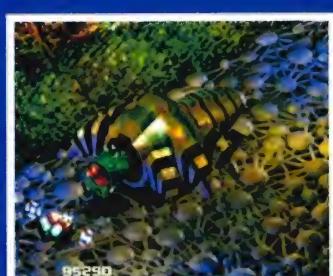
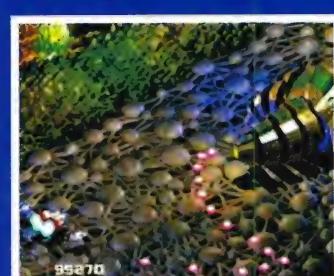
Few companies are as steeped in video game history as Namco. While *PacMan* is undoubtedly their most recognisable hero, older users may indeed remember the likes of *Rally X*, *Galaga*, and *Pole Position*. Having rekindled a few memories by tagging versions of *Galaxians*

and *Galaga* to the start of *Ridge Racer* and *Tekken*, their latest CD, *Museum Piece Vol. 1* is an unashamed trip down memory lane, with the player wandering around a 3D landscape, entering museums dedicated to the said Namco past masters. On entering the Namco 'museum' the 3D environment drops the player into a room based on one of the arcade classics, with posters and memorabilia scat-



tered around. On proceeding, though, the player eventually finds themselves in front of their chosen coin-op, while huge sprites whizz around in the background, mimicking the onscreen action – huge F1 cars, for example, grace the *Pole Position* room. There are rooms and perfect conversions of *Pole Position*, *PacMan*, *Galaga*, *Bosconian*, *ToyPop*, *Rally-X*, and an updated version of the latter with a

'New' prefix. As expected, the conversions are identical to their pensionable coin-op parents – but the realism even extends to a series of UDGs appearing when the game is booted! Similarly, fiddling with the buttons engages a CPU screen, where switches can be altered for extra lives and the like.



SLICES OF HISTORY

A whistle-stop guide to Namco's newly-available history CD...

PACMAN

Ah c'mon, it's bloody *PacMan*. Possibly the most famous game star ever.

BOSCONIAN

A little-known shoot 'em up, with the player wandering an eight-way-scrolling play area, picking off enemy ships and blowing up larger bases.

RALLY-X/NEW RALLY-X

A race game with the player attempting to avoid contact with CPU-controlled foes. Contact is fatal, but a 007-style array of oil and smoke screens eventually puts them off the scent.

GALAGA

A traditional shoot 'em up, featuring swooping aliens. The logical step up from *Galaxians*.

POLE POSITION

Released through Atari into the arcades, and a classic road racer with famously blocky sprites.

TOYPOL

Never saw this one, but an engaging game nevertheless.

COMMENT

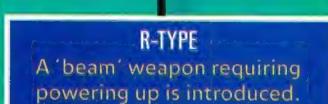
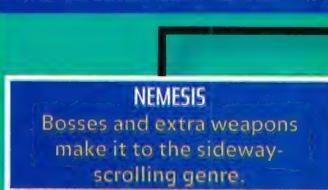
STEVE

Seeing *Viewpoint* for the first time at the E3 show in LA came as a real surprise to me. Unannounced, unheralded, but looking superb, I thought EA had really pulled out the stops to make a favourite coin-op of mine even better. However, it is often said that the memory cheats and, to an extent, this is true of *Viewpoint*. While I appreciate its finer points and superb graphics, its simplicity as an enjoyable blaster isn't enough to sustain long-term interest. The levels are incredibly tough and, initially progress can be immensely frustrating. Granted, the password system and smart bombs make life easier, but I have a feeling the extreme difficulty is there to make up for the lack of stages. In short, while I am still very fond of this 'meat and potato' blaster, the basic idea seems tired and, as such, cannot warrant a higher mark.

VIEWPOINT

SHIP SHAPE

As well as the three specials that are available, there are also a few other things lurking about that improve the effectiveness of your ship. To triple your firepower there are two revolving globes which glide along at your side and shoot in synchronisation. Also, look out for the star icon which improves the power of the bullets you fire and also the shield which protects you for one hit. Finally, by holding the fire button down, you charge up and are then able to release a bolt significantly more powerful. But remember that in the time it takes to do this, you're probably being swarmed by enemies.



FROM PRE-VIEWPOINT TO RE-VIEWPOINT

Since we had *Viewpoint* in for preview in Issue Two a number of improvements have been made. Most of them are cosmetic, seeing an improved detail in the sprites, especially the bosses. However, EA have also made it a bit more frenetic by including more sprites and by making the bosses tougher to beat. No new power-ups have been introduced though which is a bit of a shame because as well as adding to the variety, a few more weapons would alleviate how mind-bogglingly hard the game is.



SHOOT 'EM UPS – ROUND AND ROUND THEY GO...

The shoot 'em up is the perfect example of how ideas come round and round again. From the mundane *Space Invaders*, a new generation of ideas were spawned, only to run out and appear once again as new slants on perspective were attempted. What follows is a sketchy family tree of this most popular genre, with the most innovative shoot 'em ups listed for what they add to the genre.

DEFENDER
Pushes the whole thing on to its side.

SCRAMBLE
Sideways action, but with a multi-stage mission.

NEMESIS
Bosses and extra weapons make it to the sideway-scrolling genre.

R-TYPE
A 'beam' weapon requiring powering up is introduced.

SPACE WAR
Basic one-on-one blaster.

SPACE INVADERS
One man against hordes of alien ships.

GALAXIAN
Adds swooping fleets to the *Space Invaders* idea.

PHOENIX
Galaxians finds a larger 'boss creature' plonked on to the final screen.

STARFORCE
The first vertically-scrolling shoot 'em up. 'Power-ups' are also introduced.

ZAXXON
First to use an isometric angle.

VIEWPOINT
It all comes together: *R-Type* and *Zaxxon* combines.

STAR WARS
Entering the 3D era, blasting into the screen.

GALAXY FORCE
Ties up the loose ends by mixing everything into a 3D blaster...

COMMENT

ROB

The comparisons to the bygone

Zaxxon are easy enough to spot. The basic tenets of the gameplay are identical: a left to right, diagonally scrolling shoot 'em up with special weapons and the occasional pick-up. Where the two games diverge drastically is in how they look. *Viewpoint* is simply stunning to look at with amazing light sourcing making the chrome shine, the water glitter and the fire glow. This graphical expertise is also prevalent in the variety of sprites and the detail of them, and especially with the bosses. Be warned though, *Viewpoint* is an incredibly tough game. Even on easy it'll have you bewildered as to what it takes to make it through a level. It is perhaps for this reason that the levels are all quite short and that there are only six of them in all. In criticism I would have liked to have had a few more power ups and maybe a greater choice of special bombs available. But if you're someone who thinks you're hot stuff when it comes to shoot 'em ups, get a hold of *Viewpoint* and be blasted back down to size.

RATING

90

85

86

80

80

84

OVERALL



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Ridge Racer

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& backwards. Select All
cars including the secret
Black Griffin car.

Destruction Derby

Your car receives no
damage

Kileak The Blood

All weapons activated
and unlimited power.

Rayman

255 lives

AND MORE...

Wipeout

Race mode on
all tracks.

Jumping Flash

Select any world. Plus
super high jump.

Lemmings 3D

Select any level

Tekken

Select all extra hidden
fighters. (See example)

Air Combat

Select any mission and
any aircraft.

Simply choose from the
menu of amazing Game
Busting cheats...Just look
at some of the games

EXAMPLE CHEAT!
TEKKEN™ by NAMCO™

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PLUS POINTS



Three issues old, and already we've been inundated by stupid 'what's better' and 'please put these games in order of best to worst' letters. Consider this sort of letter now banned. Outahere. Nowayjose. But if you do have intelligent things to ask, please write in and we'll do our best. Ta.

Send your views and questions to:

Plus Points,
PlayStation Plus,
Priory Court,
30-32 Farringdon Lane,
London,
EC1R 3AU

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS [SIGH]

September 29th! I've been waiting for a day like this all my life. On this Friday I went into Toys 'R' Us and bought a PlayStation for £287 with *Street Fighter: The Movie* game, the demo CD and a demo tape free. Bargain! I then went into WH Smiths and bought your mag. Another bargain! Your mag covered an amazing amount of games within its covers. Congratulations on one fine publication. Anyway, here's a few Q's in exchange for A's:

1. Is there any chance you could

include a demo CD with future issues by putting the price of your mag up to say £5?

2. What sort of picture will we get from import games on a PAL machine?
3. What's the real reason for the black coating on the CD's? Is it for anti-piracy?
4. How about a games chart on import and official games?
5. Can you do a readers ad section for people who want to sell or swap their games?
6. Finally, do you know the cheat to use the Black Griffin car in Ridge Racer? Please say yes to this.

Neil Baxter, Bodmin

The bane of my life are multi-question letters. Most of your points were answered last month, so I really can't be arsed to go into it all over again. The reason Sony have black CDs isn't anything as complex as piracy reasons, it's simply a style thing. If we can find a reliable chart we'll consider it, but we're tight enough on space without adding a 'Multi-Coloured Swap Shop' to the mag. We've got enough tossers working here as it is, without someone pretending to be Cheggers or Noel Edmonds...

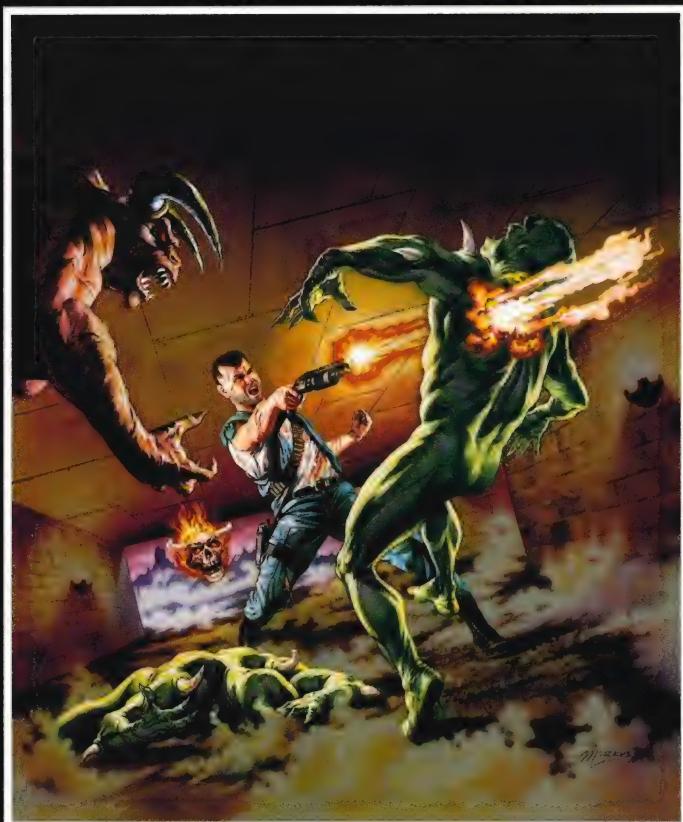
DOOM PLUS?

Excellent mag, nice layout, good reviews, witty 'put downs' to idiots etc. – which may happen to me! Anyway onward – I was reading your feature on *Doom* last month (being a fanatical 'sad' *Doom* player myself) and was wondering if there will be anyway of playing external PWADs? There are hundreds of great levels out there begging to be played and, to be frank, the levels in the original *Doom* are pretty poor by comparison – for two player mode at any rate, and let's be honest, single player mode is strictly for girls. If it wasn't for

the external PWAD capability of *Doom* it would have died long long ago. Just two more things: will there be a steering wheel

IMPORT INTO PAL DOES GO

write to inform you that the information you gave to Mr Dave



coming out for the PlayStation and can you extend your letters page?

Stephen Angood, Swindon

GTi's *Doom* features elements of *Doom*, *Doom II*, and *Ultimate Doom*, leaving out the weaker stages for a much tighter game. As far as I know there's isn't a way to create data discs for the PlayStation, but as GTi currently have no plans anyway, it's a redundant factor. Numerous new controllers are on the cards, but there's no sign of a steering wheel one yet.



West of Sunderland is wrong. You told him in the November issue that import games will not work on PAL machines and vice versa. Well they will if you use the following little tip:

First go to the CD player screen and place any CD in the PlayStation so long as it matches – ie UK machine – UK game, Japanese machine – Japanese game etc. Do not close the lid. Instead place something on the back like a small bolt. I use a small piece of lead rod. The disk will spin for about three seconds. Remove the CD and replace it with your import game. Remember to leave the bolt in place. Now exit the CD player screen and the game will automatically load.

I was told this be the shop where I got my US PlayStation from. They also told me that a switch can be fitted for about £20. NB – this works on all makes of the PlayStation only with a SCART lead. If an RF cable is used the picture on import games is either fuzzy or black and white. I know several people, all with different makes of PlayStation, who use this method successfully.

Carl Norcup, Newcastle

We've been using what we call the 'pen trick' for quite a while now, but it can hardly be called the safest method can it? I'm sure Datel will eventually release a piece of plastic to stick in the small hole in the PlayStation's CD port, then we can get on with more important matters. This subject – tedious as it is – is now closed.

MORE SODDING QUESTIONS

Your magazine is really interesting and funny. After buying and reading it just twice I am a dedicated follower. I have just purchased a PlayStation so please please please could you answer some questions of mine.



1. What are the best 3D and 2D fighting games on the PlayStation?
2. When are the following games going to be released: Street Fighter Alpha, X Men: Children of the Atom and Tekken 2?
3. Will any Zelda-type RPG's be coming out for the PlayStation in the near future?
4. Are there any good footy management games in the pipeline for

the PlayStation.
D.O. Eddy, Bracknell

Tekken is by far the greatest beat 'em up. Period. Virgin have now taken on the rights to *Street Fighter Alpha* (and, indeed, most of Capcom's other new titles) and it's due in March. *X-Men* is coming, via Acclaim, sometime in February. *Tekken 2* is at least nine months away, more for the PAL version. There are plenty of decent 3D RPGs to replace *Zelda*, and take a look at Elite's *On-Side* for your footy manager fix.

A SKINFLINT WRITES

Why is it that the price of PlayStation games are so high? I mean, in Japan where the market for Sony is booming the games are almost half the price. I know I speak for hundreds, maybe thousands of PlayStation owners when I say we all want to know why the prices are so high. The majority of our market is made up of kids and teenagers, most of whom don't and can't work so where the heck are we meant to raise the cash for games. I know many will say parents, but let's face it, parents will only go so far. Please put us all at peace and give us a

straight answer. Is Sony's market research not aware of what they are asking us to pay. I mean, most of the games on the PlayStation are brilliant but paying £40 or £50 for next generation console games is still too much. I think that games for next gen consoles should be no more than £25. Companies would still make money if they sold them at that price but £40 or £50 for a game is daylight robbery. It's a joke what they are expecting us to pay.

Darren Schliefe, Norfolk

Don't pay it then. Who said you had to? Games have always been in this price bracket – apart from, of course, Spectrum cassettes which cost a fiver, as I'm sure you were bound to retort. Prices are high because a game like *Jumping Flash* is created over a period as long as eighteen months, by a team of dozens. Costs are spiralling in terms of development, and this is ultimately reflected in the price. If the price is ever to come down, it will be when the CDs sell many more copies, allowing for duplication costs and the like to fall. Until then, your £25

ball-park figure is, I'm rather afraid, very unrealistic.

A PLEA FOR EDUCATION

I presume that I would be one of your older readers now that I've managed to make it into my thirties, but even at my advanced age I still enjoy a good game, so I bought a PlayStation on its release day. The demo CD was a great idea and the first game I bought was *WipeOut* and it still has me playing it with my chin on the floor after three weeks. My only question is are there any software companies intending to release any educational software for the PlayStation? Encyclopedias, for example. I hope so as I think that this move would make the PlayStation truly a system for absolutely everyone.

Chris, Peterborough

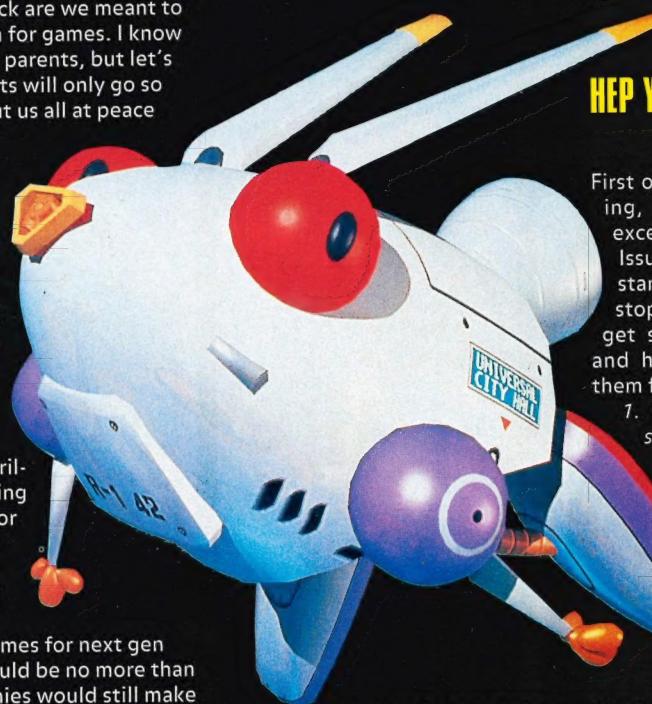


readers, peel off those Guns N' Roses T-shirts, wash that greasy mat atop your napper and go out and meet some real people, ya sad buggers.

So lads, if you want a bit of credibility, weed out the weirdos. Secondly, is there any chance of a free copy of the first issue as I missed out? And lastly, give us a job. Oh, and by the way, if anybody writes in to criticise my letter, I know the editor and your address is mine.

Mr. I Takeitt, Anywhich Way

Admit it, you're a bloody fifteen year-old who has been into a pub once (probably to pass a message on to a parent). Are we right?



No plans for educational stuff, I'm afraid.

HEP YOUNG THANG

First of all the mag is really kicking, with good reviews and excellent features like *Doom* in Issue Two. Keep up the high standard. But I think I should stop sucking up to you and just get straight to the questions, and hopefully you can answer them for me?

1. Will there be a really good shoot 'em up like *Virtua Cop* coming on to the PS?
2. Will it include a gun?
3. How much will it cost?
4. Will there be a *Doom 2* coming out for the PS?

James Warley, West Sussex

Kicking? KICKING? Enough with the pseudo hip-speak, already! No, nothing like *Virtua Cop* is planned. Buy the wrong machine did we?

A SHANDY BOY WRITES

After reading last month's mag I thought I had to write in. As I read most of the mag I thought it was shaping up as a mag for lager swigging lads like myself, you know? Folk with a life? Then I got to the letters page and there's arses spouting out shite like "Is the SCART cable RGB or Composite?" and some tosser calling the mag "fab". Oh, who gives a bugger? I mean, it's fine for you lads that write the mag to spend hours playing these games 'cause you're getting paid for it, but what about these saddos?

So can I just say to some of your



NEXT MONTH

EA's highly acclaimed interactive movie, **Wing Commander III**, hits the PlayStation. But can a star cast of Mark Hammill and Malcolm McDowell really add to the way games play? Or are they an expensive gloss over minimal gameplay?

Find out in next month's review as PlayStation Plus takes on the Kilrathi and the whole 'interactive movie' genre...



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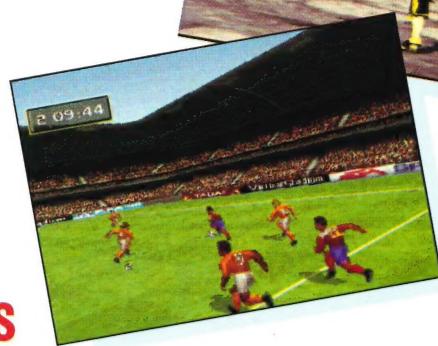
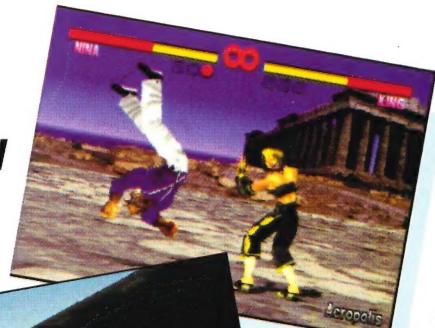
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8. JOYPAD EXTENDER CABLE	£14.99
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TEKKEN - 8 characters and 9 bosses all with devastating attacks, super smooth animation with mind-bending, back breaking martial arts manoeuvres



FIFA '96
Electronic Arts top rated football game is now available for the Playstation

THIS MONTHS HIGHLY RECOMMENDED GAMES

HERE IS JUST A SELECTION OF SOME OF THE OTHER GREAT TITLES AVAILABLE

TOP TEN GAMES

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Tekken	£39.99
Tohshinden	£39.99
Jumping Flash	£37.99
Wipeout	£39.99
Destruction Derby	£36.99
3D Lemmings.....	£34.99
Mortal Kombat 3	£39.99
FIFA 96	£36.99
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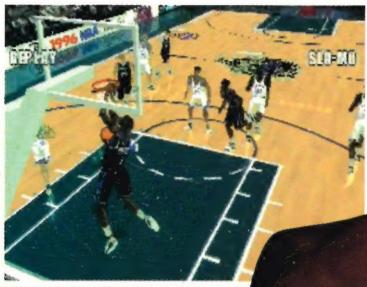
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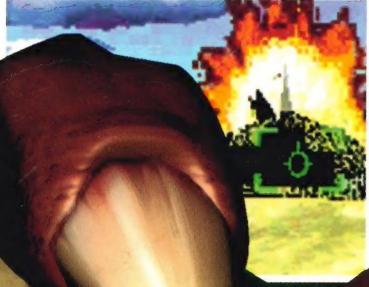
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